THE CATHOLIC ART QUARTERLY

Official Bulletin of the Catholic Art Association

Printed four times a year: Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Michaelmas
with ecclesiastical approbation, at Taunton, Massachusetts

VOLUME XXII EASTER 1959 NUMBER 2

CONTENTS

Heritage — *Editorial* 34

Living Craftmanship in Japan — *James Plumer* 35

The President's Notes 46

Artistic Freedom — *Sister M. Jeanne, O.S.F.* 47

How Art Becomes Liturgical — *A. Durand* 56

The Church Incarnate — *Review* — *Thomas Phelan* 60

Making and Thinking — *Review* — *Bede Griffiths, O.S.B.* 62

The New St. Basil Hymnal — *Review* — *Paul Ladd, Jr.* 63

The Catholic Art Quarterly is indexed in the *Catholic Periodical Index*

MEMBERSHIP, PRIVILEGES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Catholic Art Association is a non-profit educational organization. Membership in it is open to all, whether Catholic or not, who endorse its principles and its aims, and sign a pledge of endorsement.

The privileges of membership include the right to hold office in the Association, to vote in elections and on other matters submitted to the membership, and to receive the Association's official publication, *The Catholic Art Quarterly*. Subscribers may become members by officially endorsing the Association's principles and aims.

INDIVIDUAL	$5.00
STUDENT	$2.00
INSTITUTION (2 copies)	$7.00

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE CATHOLIC ART ASSOCIATION,
53 RIDGEWOOD ROAD, BUFFALO 20, NEW YORK

HERITAGE

THERE IS A GOOD deal of misunderstanding of our attitude toward what is called "modern art". We have always preferred praising what is praiseworthy, whenever possible, to blaming what is blameworthy, and this has led some to believe that we have little to say on the subject. Such, however, is not the case.

We live in time, and time presents itself as a relentless drift of future into present and present into past. All our hopes lie before us, but all our experience lies behind. Only a tiny bit of the experience from which any one of us profits is his own; the greater part of it comes to us from our ancestors. The most startling discoveries of modern scientists could never have been made had they not been based on discoveries achieved centuries ago.

The word *heritage* sums up our position in time as intermediaries between our ancestors and our descendants. Mr. Douglas Woodruff has well said that "a heritage is . . . a beginning rather than an end . . . The position of an heir has always been envied because of its potentiality, because of what can be done with the inheritance, and so should it be with the moral and doctrinal heritage that our ancestors have handed down to us, their grateful but unbound posterity.

"There is something quite ludicrous in the common spectacle of people priding themselves on their spiritual independence, imagining themselves to be standing impressively four square to the heavens, exercising their private judgment and living by the light of their honestly formed highly personal beliefs, when, in fact, it is all too clear that they are being carried along by the contemporary wind, and are so much its prey that they are not even conscious of what is happening. The vast majority of men, said Dr. Johnson, have no grounds for their opinions except fashion; they follow the fashion of their day in all matters.[1]

Those who accept the "modern school of art" at its own valuation miss the absurdity of its revolutionary position. What pictorial values the moderns still hold, they have received by inheritance. Their difference from traditional artists is one of subtraction rather than of addition The impressionists were the last group to have discovered anything really valuable. Since their time, no formal nor technical discovery has been made that can be explained in clear English.

Our historical heritage shows us plainly enough how the revolutionary school of art has developed. It is the final phase of a progressive divorce between maker and user which began in the early Renaissance. Just as children who feel that they have no real place in the affection of their parents will prefer mischief and punishment to the alternative of continued unnotice, so the socially displaced descendants of the image-makers and builders of the past are ready to commit any folly rather than go unnoticed by a society that no longer needs them. For indeed, as Father D'Arcy has said, "Industrialism has robbed the artist of the necessity of making anything useful."

[1] "The Uncommitted Mind" in *Catholic Approaches*, Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, N. Y. 1955, p. 37.

LIVING CRAFTMANSHIP IN JAPAN

JAMES MARSHALL PLUMER

RISE EARLY IN TOKYO—a little after dawn—and wander through the streets, any but the broadest avenues, and you will meet people sweeping.

Sweeping is one of the humblest of all arts. There are thousands in Tokyo and elsewhere—men and women—who are accomplished at it. And even if none were clumsy, one might say, "This is no way to clean the largest city in the world." For the fact is that Tokyo now claims more living souls than London. Yet despite its mighty size many householders accept the responsibility for keeping immaculate their own adjoining bit of road. In many sections one is reminded of the words of Saint Augustine, "If every man sweeps in front of his own door, all the street is made clean." Such sweeping reflects the responsibility of the craftsman to his fellow man, and this is found in many of the basic crafts all over Japan even in the turmoil of rapid change today.

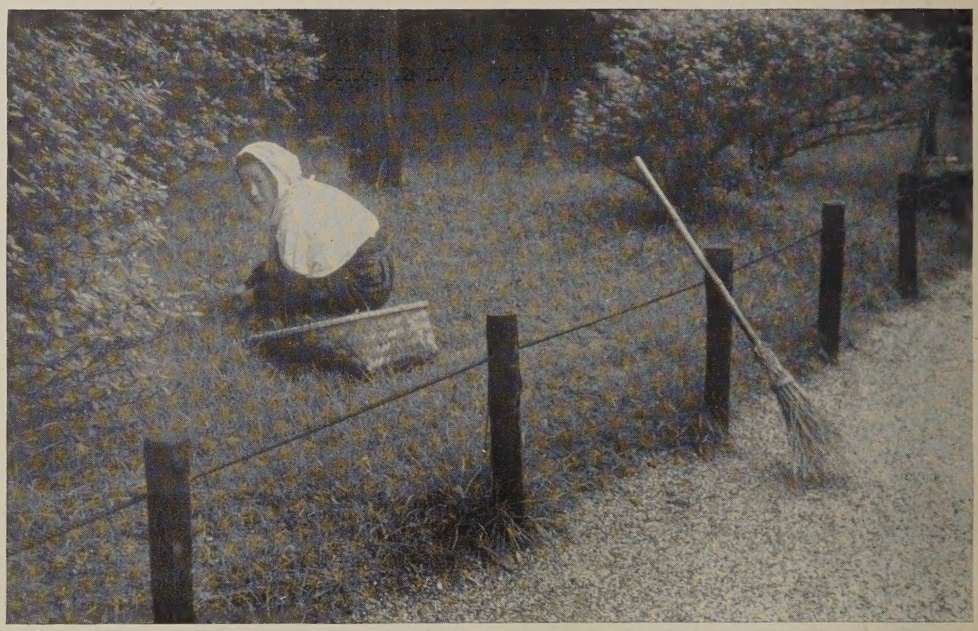
As to the act of sweeping, there are many movements and many varied pressures, depending on what is to be swept and by what kind of broom. A different art it is to sweep a road than to brush the thick straw matting of a home, a different art to sweep a temple or a bus.

We have hit upon this lowly activity as suggestive of how and where one may have to look for surviving handicrafts today. Our purpose here is not to regret the crafts that have died out nor to point out that in the future others may be lost. Our glimpse is of the present. It will pay us to glance at a number of the ordinary occupations if we are to get at the bed rock of Japanese crafts.

Close to sweeping is raking. The gardener in Japan employs a light, resilient, springy broom in work for which we employ a heavy metal rake. The light bamboo rakes, which we import or imitate in metal for piling leaves, are used there to smooth sanded pathways and to bring order to pebbles disarranged. The skillful trailing of a rake through sand can bring to mind waves and ocean currents as clearly as the painting of ink lines on paper.

Despite inroads of factory products, farming still involves the use of many bamboo utensils, home or village-made. Harvest baskets of bamboo, rivalling our ash-splint parallels of yesterday, reveal a living skill in

Mr. Plumer is Associate Professor of Far Eastern Art at the University of Michigan. In Tokyo in 1948 and 1949 he was advisor on Fine Arts to General MacArthur. He is now Editor Emeritus of The Far Eastern Ceramic Bulletin. *In May and June of last year he returned to Japan at the invitation of the Abbot of the Horyu-ji Monastery at Nara, where he represented American individuals and institutions at the dedication of a memorial monument to Dr. Langdon Warner. Professor Plumer has prepared the following article, illustrated by his own photographs, as a report on the present status of traditional craftsmanship in Japan.*



IN THE TEMPLE GROUNDS BY THE PHOENIX HALL AT UJI

Whether she is busy at removing grass from moss, or weeds from grass, or litter from the pebbled path, the old woman holds the lowest rank amongst gardeners. None is closer to the earth. The bamboo trash basket is her assistant—the bamboo broom her symbol.

basketry. Their ordered, geometric beauty, woven in, gives strength and delights the eye for years to come. Art historians might well observe that "The Geometric Period" of man's art still lives in the Japanese countryside. Wherever bamboo is used, except for novelties, there is a bond between the craftsmen of today and of prehistoric times.

Similarly, the use of wooden utensils and the craftsmanship that goes with working wood bind the Japanese woodworkers of today to their brother craftsmen of generations past. Wood has always been a loved material in Japan. Despite intrusion of enamelled iron and of ceramic tiling, vats of wood are still preferred for aging *sakê*—and wooden tubs are ever in demand for baths and laundry. Washing clothes, as done by women in every city, in every farm or mountain home, is no less an art than that of the man who makes the wooden tub. Both occupations require skill and sweat. The maker and the user of the tub depend upon each other and share a mutual respect.

Women are little spoken of as "craftsmen", yet daily they perform acts of skill. Shall we say there is no artistry to reaping rice—or rinsing clothes?

The traditional arts of home and farm merge imperceptibly with the industrial arts—in fact the Japanese term *kogei*, literally "work-skill", includes them all. We would draw attention to men as makers and builders and to such arts as pottery, furniture-making, carpentry, boat-building, stone work, and architecture. Even without the extraordinary necessity of the past decade for replacement and rebuilding, the ordinary demands of a

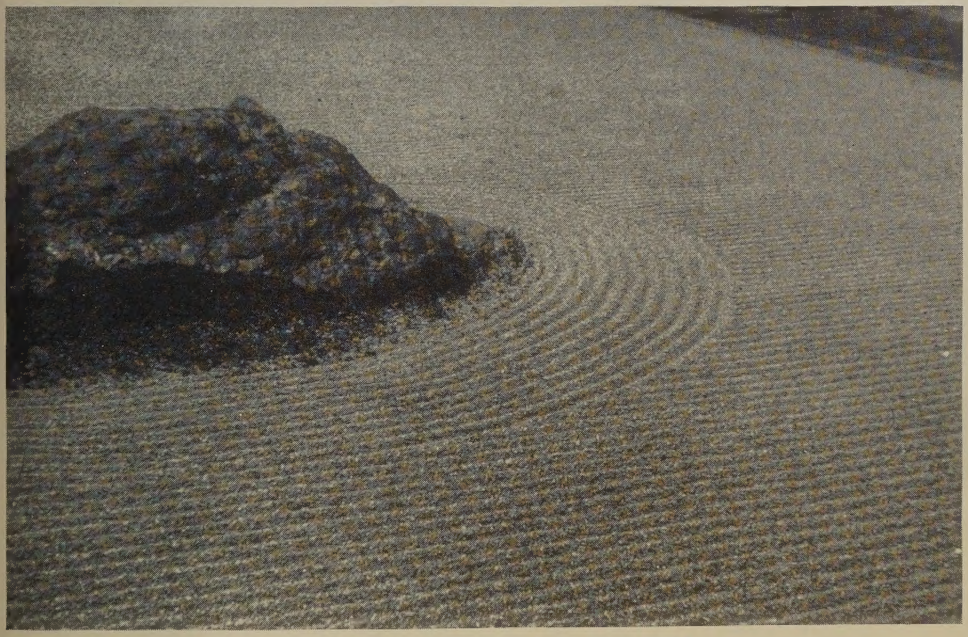
living, growing culture are sufficient to urge artisans to manly effort. How we shall have misjudged the culture of contemporary Japan if we see only "cheap labor" in a whole substratum of responsible human skill on which her modern industry stands!

Almost anywhere one can see a patient carpenter at work on a larger or a smaller house, alone or with two or three helpers. Square holes are prepared for the cross-piece to fit the upright. With sureness, cutting tools follow the black ink lines, snapped against the light colored lumber, or red lines snapped against the dark. Saw, mallet, chisel, and—for better or for worse—hammer and nails, come into play. Such craftsmanship is to be observed even in modern factories and office buildings involving poured concrete and structural steel. Rather than a gradual progression from man-made to machine-made things, or clear stratification of the two, one finds a temporary integration or a fitful balance. And for the present, certainly, the ugliness of rapid industrialization is tempered by the craftsman's heart and hand.

Any attempt to judge the status of the arts and crafts in Japan today must therefore be made in the light of the interplay of art and industry, fortunately not mutually exclusive.

Fortunately, too, most industrial units are family-size, and may even be set up in the home. The specialist in motor-car electrical wiring, for example, may turn out to be a mechanic (or his widow) assisted by their sons, and an outside apprentice or two, and perhaps a young daughter and a niece in hours sandwiched between house duties and school.

Even such mechanical operations,



GLIMPSE OF THE SAND GARDEN
AT THE ZEN BUDDHIST TEMPLE, RYOAN-JI, KYOTO

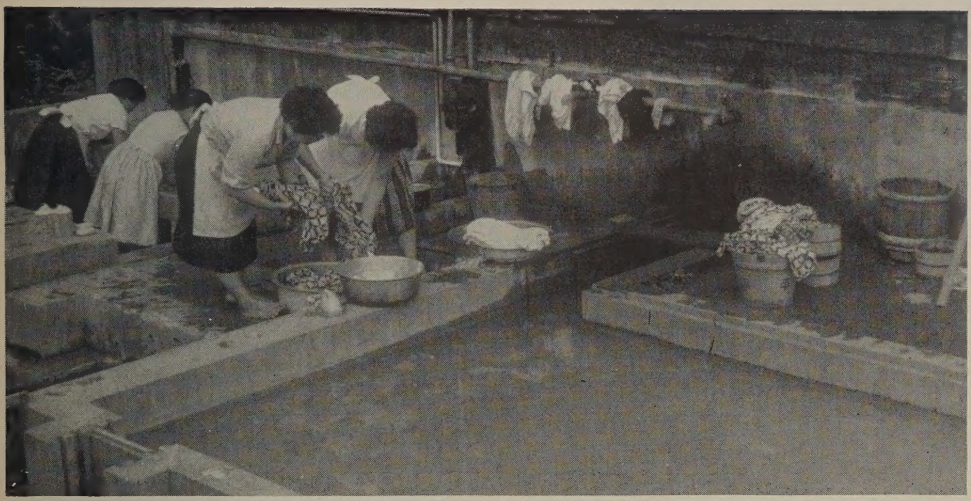
Today, as for several centuries, the marks of a rake are used in a garden of sand to suggest deep waters, and the power of suggestion is such that a mossy rock becomes an island in the sea. Is this not gardening in its starkest essentials?

GIRLS HARVESTING IN TOCHIGI PREFECTURE

Who is to say that there is no artistry in reaping rice? Who is to say that there is no beauty in big bushel baskets? Both rice and baskets are products of the farm.

OPEN FRONT WORK-SHOP IN KURASHIKI (OKAYAMA PREFECTURE)

Round wooden tubs may still be bought in any city in Japan, with legs, if wanted, provided by the use of longer staves. These tubs, bound in twisted bamboo strips, as is traditional, will, if kept in daily use, often outlast those bound in metal—for bamboo will not corrode.



BEHIND THE SCENES, AT A HOT SPRING INN, HIRAYU, (NAGANO PREFECTURE) JAPANESE ALPS

The pretty maids that grace one's inn, skimming along the smooth hallways in flowing kimonos, bringing tea in trays, have other work to do. There is rhythm in their dipping, scrubbing, rinsing, and hanging up the garments of the many guests. Theirs is an ancient and honorable art but rarely noticed and never praised.

IN THE QUARRIES AT OYA, (TOCHIGI PREFECTURE)

There was laughter from women toting off the stone chips in their home-made slings. Some one must clean up after the men at the quarries—and who could do it better than those who clean up after them at home? In the background may be seen the flowing garments, feet on lotus base, of a colossal sacred image (Kwannon) which the stone cutters have left standing in the mother rock by quarrying around it.

STONE-CUTTERS AT OYA (TOCHIGI PREFECTURE)

Building stone is still dressed by hand at Oya—and neither in the dressing nor in the quarrying is the noise of pneumatic hammer heard. Thoreau once noted how, "by patience and art" the mason "splits a stone as surely as the carpenter or woodcutter a log." And so it still is in Japan.

though not strictly within our investigation, are worth notice as embodying the family responsibility in crafts. The individual craftsman scarcely exists in Japan, so much does he rely on family help. And much hard work is delegated to servants, sons and wife.

When a craftsman lacks sons, traditional home industries are kept alive by hiring men of skill, by adoption, or by marriage. Thus integrity of family and craftsmanship have been preserved together to a degree now undreamed of in America. The Hamada family of potters, thriving today in Mashiko, is to be compared, for example, to the now extinct Norton potters of Bennington, Vermont.

One of the most significant developments is the *Min-gei*, or so-called "Folk Art Movement". This was founded by a few enlightened men under the guidance of Soetsu Yanagi three or four decades ago, and has survived the vicissitudes of those decades. It is at once a movement of appreciation and practice of the traditional arts. It has been active, in the first place, in the preservation of traditional art objects—similar to the better types of things shown in our ethnological and historical collections, and which we condescend to appreciate as "primitive".

To this end, a dignified old farm storehouse was brought stone by stone to Tokyo, and adapted to the purposes of a museum. Here are housed and beautifully displayed the simple objects from the hand and home of common man in Asia. Initial public apathy eventually gave way to whole-hearted approval, and half a dozen such museums have since been founded elsewhere.

A second and equally important feature of the Folk Art Movement has been the preservation of ancient folk

techniques. This has been done by encouragement in two directions. First, the older craftsmen, born and raised in one tradition or another—for instance, pottery, weaving, block-printing—have been visited and their work admired and purchased. Secondly, young students have been encouraged to turn their backs on effete and exotic realms in the finer arts in order to master the basic crafts of their own heritage. Thus, in the last generation, weavers, wood-workers, and potters—and other "practical artists"—have been competing successfully with painters and calligraphers.

As a natural consequence of the encouragement of production of all sorts of useful handiwork, there have been held regular exhibitions and regular sales. These are held both separately and combined. So popular have they been that regular commercial outlets, *Min-gei* shops, have sprung up in most of the larger cities. Man-made objects of practical value and of technical and aesthetic excellence are available for the modern home.

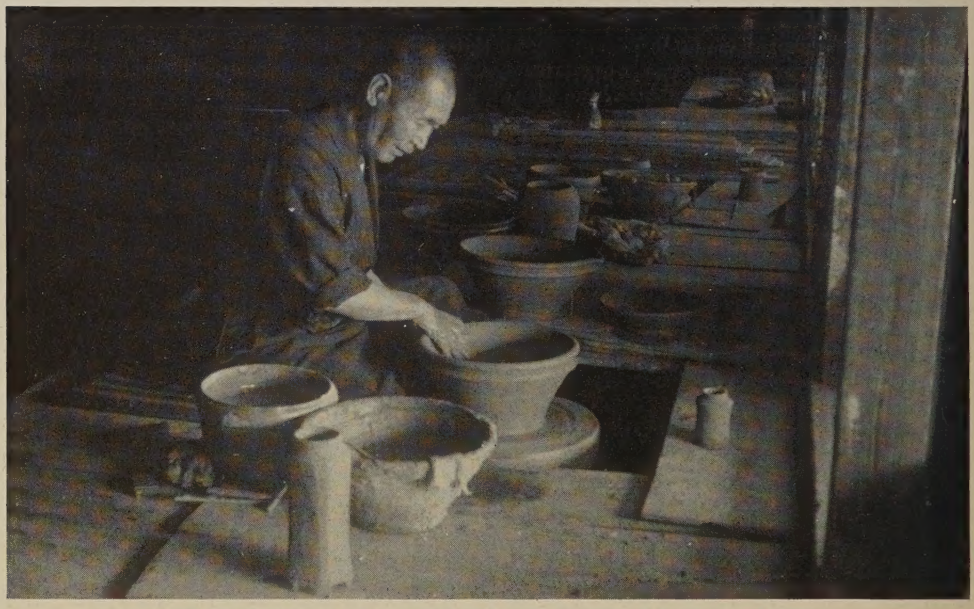
It is of interest that these shops carry the work of the modern school-bred artists side by side with the work of traditional country craftsmen. This is a test that artists in the West have rarely had to face, and it is one that has had undoubted influence on the quality of modern Japanese works of art.

Even more significant, perhaps, is the combination of many of these well-made things in a single enterprise. In an old half-timbered tavern in Matsumoto (to cite a solitary example), one may sit down on a well-made chair to a well-cooked dinner served in stoneware plates on bamboo mats, and contemplate a wood-block print on the wall. Here, obviously, another test is met. Here, for present needs, we see an integration of older crafts. A well-cooked meal is enjoyed in appropriate surroundings—surroundings in which Ruskin and Morris would feel at home.

A CULTURAL TREASURE NEAR OYA (TOCHIGI PREFECTURE)

A reed-thatched roof will last the lifetime of a man. The weight is amply held by massive wooden frames. A large house such as this provides ample room for a large family, several helpers—and, in a space well separated, the horse and cow. Tools hang at the stable end. Grain dries in the courtyard. An old homestead that has stood as a symbol of dignified human living for many generations.

LOCAL CRAFTSMEN ON HIGH SCAFFOLDING
AT THE 9TH CENTURY PAGODA AT DAIGO JI NEAR THE TOWN OF UJI
There is much in the curved and nicely fitted and dovetail timbers of an old pagoda that reminds one of a wooden Yankee vessel on the ways. If repair or reconstruction of parts is required by National Cultural Preservation authorities in Tokyo, it is the local carpenters who attend to it.



MR. SAKUMA OF MASHIKO (TOCHIGI PREFECTURE)
The village potter plies his craft, exactly as his father did before him, controlling his clay and controlled by it. Revolving clay yields less gracefully to the insistence of machines than to gentle pressure of the human hand.

ARCHITECT KATO IN CHARGE OF THE RE-BUILDING OF HIMEJI CASTLE

Of necessity, the architect in charge of re-building ancient castles must know his timber as well as the city architect must know his concrete and steel. Where else but in Japan would one find an architect standing beside a seasoned, sawn, and finished piece of lumber that measures three feet by two-feet-eight, and twenty feet in length?

HOUSE-MAID IN THE HAMADA FAMILY AT MASHIKO

Simple, honest, rugged garments are appropriate to the strong, good country women who wear them. The traditional ornamentation declares clearly its origin in warp and weft.

It will be seen at this point that the movement has gone well beyond the hopeful steps of the initiators, and that there now exists the soundest incentive for good craftsmanship—a discerning buying public. In shops catering to a discriminating modern taste, there can be bought hand-made papers, bamboo baskets, candlesticks, scarves, curtains, jugs, pots, and furniture—all measuring up to an exacting standard of design for human use.

Lest there seem too much emphasis on simple crafts handed down, or on *Min-gei* folk art revived or once removed, it may be well to end with reference to such basic and monumental arts as quarrying and architecture. In principle, these differ not at all from the other arts—yet they may reveal their truths more clearly.

Fifty miles inland from Tokyo is Oya, the tiny village that helped bring fame to Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel. Here the rock, damp in its natural state, is soft enough to saw, and is easily drilled by hand and sprung from the mother rock. Patiently the villagers quarry and dress an average, per man, of a dozen or so big blocks a day. This stone, when dried in the outer air, is one of the world's best building materials.

Fireproof farm storage buildings, as handsome as they are sturdy, are still constructed in the surrounding area. Although but a local craft, this architecture has clearly risen from the earth. And the direct functioning of craftsmanship has transformed solid rock to human purpose without losing its essential beauty.

Traditional stone craftsmanship, including the erection of monuments, stone lanterns, *torii* (Shinto gateways), guardian lions, and roadside images,

TAKEICHI KAWAI, WHO HAS GIVEN UP MASS PRODUCTION OF COMMERCIAL CERAMICS TO DEVOTE FULL TIME TO TRADITIONAL POTTING. KYOTO

Even in the most famous potteries, simple techniques are often favored. Some potters have added electric blowers for applying glaze—but in the shop of the Three Kawais (Kanjiro, Hiroshi, and Takeichi) the tin atomizer preferred is powered by human breath.

AN ITINERANT VENDOR AT MASHIKO

By bicycle-drawn mobile shops, buckets, pails, brushes, baskets, fly-swatters, toys, and what have you, are brought from door to door. Traditional objects, hand made, are in the majority, in accordance with the preference of the villagers.

flourishes all over Japan. No road-builder or gardener is unacquainted with the nature and use of rocks.

The art of thatching roofs in straw, reed, or bark has not yet been lost. This, man's sheltering himself from the elements by the lightest and handiest materials, must be one of the oldest crafts. Buildings so covered seem almost to have grown up by themselves.

Carpentry and craftsmanship go hand in hand. There are carpenters of every degree of skill, and the master carpenter is in effect an architect, a man who has worked up to the responsibilities of master builder on the job. Such a man, with a traditional work-gang, can throw up a scaffolding of rope and poles and cover it in bamboo slatting, without the use of wire, pipes, or nails. Or he can repair a ninth-century pagoda, employing the original techniques. Or he can disassemble a timbered castle and rebuild it as if the age of steam and steel had never come.

To sum up: Craftsmanship in general now appears to flow in four main channels: (1) the highly mechanized factory production of trade wares in which artisans participate and in which the machine all but obliterates the craftsman's touch; (2) the small, partially mechanized operations in which craftsmen of the old tradition are employed with good effect; (3) the old tradition carried on unbroken and scarcely susceptible to change; and (4) the revitalization of threatened or dying crafts by perceptive and dedicated artists of our day.

In another place we might regret the passing of many of the ancient skills; in another place we might point with alarm to future dangers. Our purpose here is to report a fact observed in Japan in 1958: that craftsmanship, despite great threatening forces, is very much alive. The ancient principles are still in force.

THE PRESIDENT'S NOTES

THE NEW ORGANIZATION of the Association is suffering the pains of growth. We officers are learning by experience, and the unavailability of working personnel is making its impression on our plans. *The Catholic Art Teacher* has had to be dropped for the present, due to the recent illness of its editor. Fees are now being returned to subscribers.

But the bright signs outweigh the dark. The Education Committee still intends to do something for elementary and high school teachers, and for seminarians and teachers-in-training. *The Catholic Art Quarterly* will make a special effort to satisfy the needs of college and university teachers.

The executive secretary reminds you of the availability of *Making and Thinking*, by our advisor, Walter Shewring; *Current Concepts of Art*, by the chairman of our education committee, Sister M. Jeanne, O.S.F.; *Living Stones of Architecture*, by our editor, Graham Carey, and *A Priest Speaks of Chalice Design*, by the Reverend E. M. Catich, an ex-president of our Association.

And the Convention and Workshop Committee, under the chairmanship of Sister Mary Rosine, R.S.M., announces the forthcoming annual national Convention. Our host institution this year will be St. Elizabeth's College, Convent Station, New Jersey. The theme will be "The Alphabet as Sacramental". The officers' meeting will be held on August 16th, and the Convention will open on the following morning. Sister Rosine hopes to arrange a visit to see the work of an old and loyal member of the Association as a concluding feature of the Convention on the morning of August 19th.

The Exhibitions and Lectures Committee has available not only the older traveling exhibitions of the Association, but also the complete set of "Jacob's Ladder" slides—mediaeval illuminations in illustration of sacred themes; a slide lecture on Christian jewelry and another on Thomas Derrick's drawings of the parables in modern dress.

The day prior to the writing of these notes I had the privilege of offering, in the chapel of the Guild of Saints Joseph and Dominick, the first Sunday Mass since it had received the status of a semi-public oratory. This is the chapel of the Guild in Ditchling Common, Sussex, England, which our 1958 medalist described in the Christmas issue. This new mark of recognition by Holy Mother Church is testimony of her approval of the principles and the work of the Guild. Thirty-eight members and their families offered the Mass with me. I felt as though our own Catholic Art Association, which has taken so much inspiration from the Guild, also shared in this recognition. After the Mass, I addressed the regular monthly meeting of the Guild on prayer—liturgical prayer in particular. It was a very great satisfaction to be in the midst of people who have believed and lived all their lives in accordance with true principles.

At a moment of history when the world is in such a turmoil of ideas and scientific discovery, let us redouble our efforts to understand and believe the truth, so that we may be able to make our contribution to the world's very preservation.

Thomas Whelan

ARTISTIC FREEDOM

by SISTER M. JEANNE, O.S.F.

PART I

FREEDOM IS ONE OF THOSE chameleon-like words that changes color against the background of the thought of each person who uses it. It is not even helpful to isolate a particular species of freedom by qualifying it as "artistic" freedom for this merely adds to the confusion, if we may judge from popular usage or from professional practice. For the purposes of this study, then, may we clear the ground by defining our terms.

In the classical sense of the word "freedom", the liberal arts played an essential role. The studies of grammar, rhetoric and logic, of music, astronomy, arithmetic and geometry, were called *liberal* arts because their function was to liberate or to free the human mind from the slavery of ignorance, superstition and error. The freedom so achieved is an intellectual capacity of true and right discernment. Although the great thinkers of the past spoke of the liberalizing potential of the arts, they designated one who had achieved this freedom, not as one who was free, but rather as one who was wise. They well understood that freedom of the human mind to range over the truths implicit in reality lays a burden on the human will to bring that truth to bear on human conduct. Today, far removed as we are in time and ideology from the Ancients, we talk glibly about freedom, but little about wisdom.

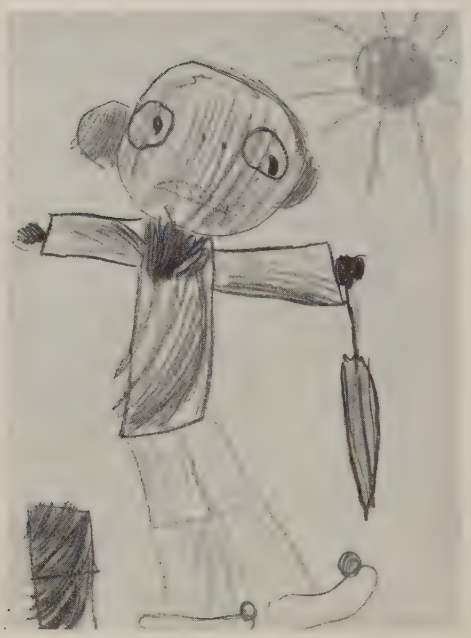
Even though our notions about the studies comprising these liberal or liberalizing arts have been changed notably since the 16th century, the freedom sought today is, as it was for the Ancients, essentially an intellectual freedom. Then when we speak of the freedom of art, or artistic freedom, St. Thomas can well be chosen as spokesman for the concept of art in the perennial philosophy: art is an intellectual capacity to make, following a true course of reasoning. Because art is an intellectual power, the freedom characterized as "artistic" is likewise intellectual and it is exercised within the context of imagination, reason and will.

To place in relief the particular aspects of freedom which are necessarily of concern to artists as well as to teachers of art, let us consider a trilogy of freedoms and the trilogy of worlds in which each may legitimately be exercised.

I. The World of Imagination

The world of a child is a world of discovery. From his first contact with reality until his rational powers are so developed that he is consistently responsible for his actions—perhaps at seven years of age, but frequently

Sister Jeanne is at the head of the Department of Art, Rosary Hill College, Buffalo. In 1949 she began to edit The Catholic Elementary Art Guide, *and from 1951 to 1956* The Catholic Art Quarterly. *She edited the* Course of Study (Art in the Elementary School) *for the diocese of New York State, and in 1955 and 1956 was in charge of the Workshops on Art at The Catholic University of America, publishing the proceedings of these Workshops as* Art in Christian Education *and* Art as Language. *In 1958 she published* Current Concepts of Art, *which is probably the most important of all her works.*



LITTLE BLACK SAMBO, Age 5
Though this drawing is intended as a copy from a book, it is nevertheless conceptional and imaginative in its method. The draftsman is still at the stage of the child who said, "I draw a line around my think." He is untroubled by the difference between his version and his exemplar.

younger—a child lives in a world of imagination. Each new contact with reality is characterized by pleasure or by pain. These experiences are the raw materials for the ego-centric world which a developing imagination builds in a child's effort to achieve selfhood. This world of growing imagination is fundamental to normal human development in general, and it is remarkably significant in artistic development in particular.

For the imagination to develop naturally and normally, a child must be allowed a full range of experiences which his exploration of the world of reality provides in terms of sensible contacts as well as in basic human relations. If this ego-centric world of a small child may be called a world of imagination, then the freedom which a child must be able to enjoy—to benefit adequately and normally from his imaginative experiences—is a *freedom from fear* in the realm of the imagination. Where fear—usually of adult disapproval—has not blocked the avenues of communication for a child, his imaginative spontaneity is expressed in word, in dramatic play, in song, in manipulation of objects, in drawing, in painting, and in the countless ways a small child has of expressing his self. This is as it should be.

Because imaginative spontaneity is basic to the development of one's artistic powers, a teacher who works with pre-school or primary school children (kindergarten through second or third grade) should realize that her role consists essentially in extending a child's frame of reference not only in regard to experience to be realized but also in the range of materials adequate to a child's expression of those experiences. Since a teacher should be primarily concerned with the preservation and enrichment of a child's imaginative spontaneity in artistic expression, she will be much more concerned with what happens to a child during the process of his creative or imaginative activities than with the end-product itself. It is much more important, for example, that a child experience delight in manipulating clay or in applying paint to paper—in the process of sharing or communicating an experience that was meaningful to him—than that the clay object or the painted "picture" be technically excellent.

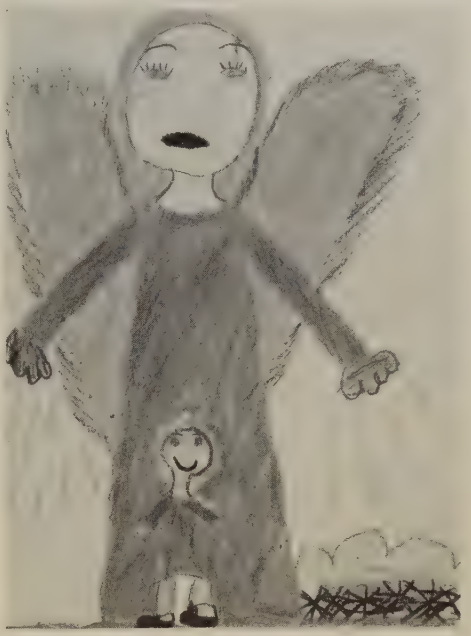
It is in this sense that the therapeutic values of creative expression are paramount in any program of instruction in art on the pre-school and primary level. Activities planned or experiences provided children at this age

should be selected for their value to the child himself: Will it contribute to a child's imaginative delight? Will it extend his ego-centric frame of reference to include worthwhile thoughts or things? Will it enrich his contact with familiar objects? Will it provide opportunity for sharing ideas or experiences — which is normally a delightful procedure for a child when he is with those he loves and is thus free from fear? Will it provide a normal emotional outlet for what might otherwise find expression in objectionable conduct or, worse still, in introversion?

But when we suggest that early instruction in art should be essentially therapeutic, we do not mean, for example, that a child who feels an urge to apply crayon to already painted walls should be allowed to do so simply because he will experience an emotional release while he does it. The therapy involved in art instruction at this age of a child's life is at the discretion of a wise teacher who does not forget the evil effects of original sin nor the energizing power of grace in her task of widening horizons and fostering artistic independence.

If children are naturally ego-centric, then the work of education in general, and of instruction in all the arts in particular, is to preserve and to enrich the essentially good aspects of a child's subjective approach to life and to the world of nature, while at the same time leading him to recognize that he is a small but significant part of a larger, objective world which is a complex of relationships to God, to neighbor, and to the world about him. What is to be preserved and fostered is a child's normal creative spontaneity, his imaginative independence, and his self-reliance in the expression of his ideas. Thus the freedom he should enjoy — which is consonant with his age and circumstances — is a freedom from fear: from fear of not possessing adult-approved ideas to express, from fear of not knowing what adults would do if they were in his place, and from fear of adult disapproval or ridicule of his honest efforts. If a child is an unwitting slave to these fears, he will respond to an opportunity to express his ideas in some creative medium, with the declaration, "I don't *want* to make anything. I don't know how." Or he will hide beneath an adult-approved formula, for example, for drawing an automobile or an airplane, and then produce this identical pattern each time he is asked to draw or paint or model.

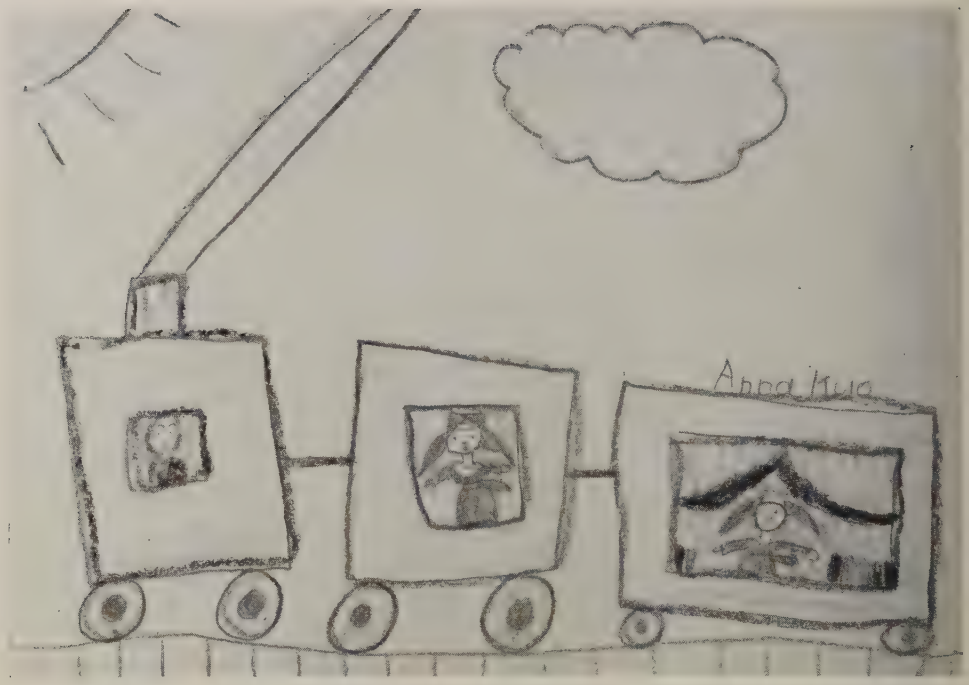
The purpose of fostering freedom from fear in very young children is to



GUARDIAN ANGEL, Age 6 or 7

This also is inspired, in this case by Lauren Ford's beautiful painting, but the drawing is a freshly imagined version of an idea rather than a copying of detailed effects. Though an attempt to copy, it is really original in the true sense of having an imaginative origin.

St. Joseph's Commercial



IN THE TRAIN, Age 7

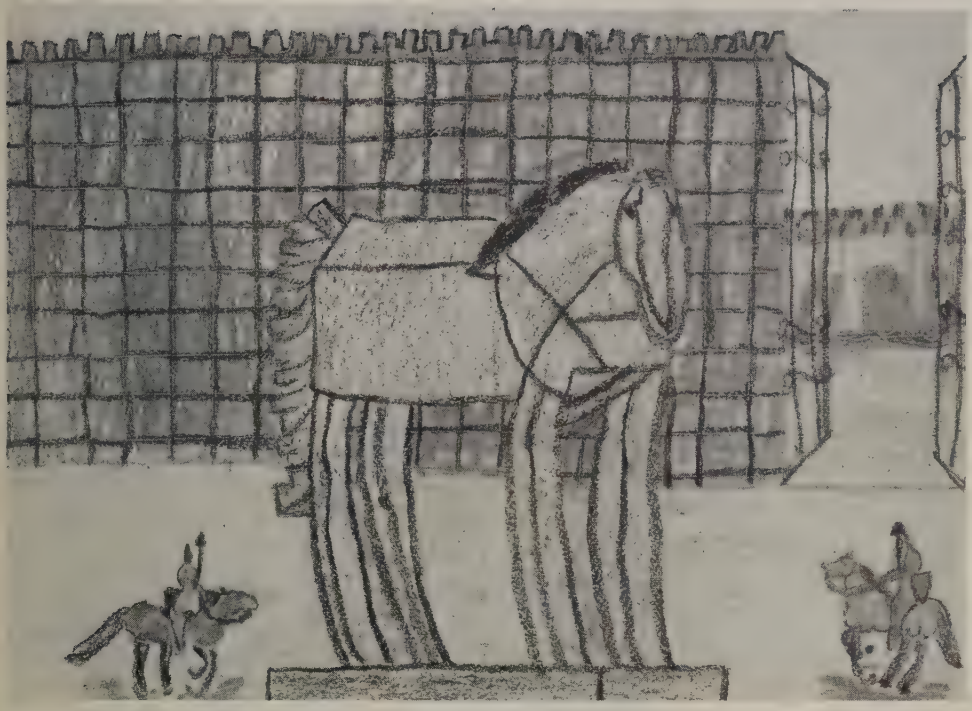
The author is shown in the last car with her books. This is not a copy of another picture, but has all the good qualities of I and II. This child's father is a professional artist, and her unusual firmness of line and clarity of sight may be partly due to wise parental guidance.

facilitate the gradual development of their physical powers through muscular experience and control, their emotional stability through imaginatively controlled expression, and their intellectual maturity through effective externalization of thoughts and feelings. Thus freedom from the fears mentioned above serves rightful purposes and it is a perfectly legitimate *right* when a child inhabits a world in which discovery unlocks manifold doors to truth which can then be interpreted in such a highly personal, imaginative way.

II. The World of Developing Reason

But a child is a child only once, and then only during a comparatively short period of the normal span of human life. When, in the ordinary course of human growth and development, a child comes into possession of his self-determining power, he should be helped to pass from artistic immaturity, which characterized his early efforts, to artistic adolescence. Just as we speak of a crisis of adolescence in human life, so too can we speak of a crisis in the development of one's artistic powers, for it is no simple task for a child to relate his imagined world to the real one that now threatens his self-complacency. In this stage, a child, by perceptible degrees, enters the world of reason in which he comes to grips with reality. His approach to truth becomes progressively more realistic, but it should be so without loss of imaginative power.

For the reason to develop naturally



THE TROJAN HORSE, Age 11

In this and the following two drawings, a new stage has been entered. This child, aware of the difference between her work and that of adults, has become uneasy. She no longer draws directly from interior images but painfully strives to achieve grown-up effects.

and normally in regard to the development of the virtue of art—which he possesses in a still undeveloped state—a child must be allowed a full range of artistic experiences within the world of reality. During these years—which may extend from eight to eighteen, more or less—the freedom which should be progressively gained by dint of his own effort is a *freedom from ignorance*. Where ignorance—through lack of intellectual acumen, lack of adequate information, or lack of the disciplinary values of experience and instruction—does not prevent the proper functioning and development of a child's art, he will be ever more soberly and seriously interested in the world in which he finds himself, and he will be eager to discover ways and means of making his hands and his tools do the bidding of his active mind.

A child must not only curb his imagination without suppressing it, but also acquire a progressive control over the ideas, the tools, and the materials he uses, to bring them into harmony with the requirements of objective reality. Hence, a teacher who works with children from fourth grade through high school—with possible increase or diminution in the range—should be mindful that the human mind as well as the human body can only achieve full maturity through the discipline of life's direct experiences and the vicarious experiences provided by formal education. An elementary and high school teacher must certainly be as concerned as the

THE PIED PIPER, Age 11

The unavoidable defects of the stage of adolescence are still more apparent here. The child strives to free himself from the effects of his ignorance, but his imagination is, for the time at least, atrophied. He is not yet able to relate his outer to his inner experience.

pre-school and primary school teacher to preserve the native imaginative spontaneity of her students, but she knows that this will be utterly impossible if she fails to provide a progressive enrichment of the content supplied to the imagination and to provide the kind of materials and tools adequate to a growing child's artistic expression of his ideas. In very early stages of a child's development—when he still revels in a world that lies in wait for him to discover its treasures—it is a perfectly reasonable and emotionally rewarding experience for a child to discover for himself, for example, what clay will do. It can be punched, pulled, rolled, twisted, and shaped. But such "experimentation with materials" is not adequate to the needs of adolescents, even though it may be useful as a preliminary procedure to encourage familiarity and control of the material used.

Whereas the therapeutic values were paramount in determining the artistic experiences planned for very young children, the values inherent in the artistic experiences for adolescents are essentially disciplinary. Unfortunately the word "discipline" has a bad odor about it and it has been dropped from much current writing on education in general and on art in the schools in particular. The discipline to which we refer, however, is a necessary prerequisite for attaining maturity as a human being as well as maturity as a practising artist. Essentially, it is a person's voluntary subjection of his own physical, emotional, and intellectual powers (of which the virtue of art is one) to the control of his reason. This domination of the human *ratio* over its subsidiary powers is part of the complex process of "growing up" —both to full stature as a rational human being and also to full maturity in the perfection of one's art. Activities planned or experiences offered to students at this age should be selected according to their value in fostering a progressive maturity; will it provide opportunity for a student to plan the work to be done and then to see it to a successful conclusion? Will it require the discipline of training the mind and the hands to cooperate in producing a predetermined effect or product? Will it demand the exercise of the virtues of patience, humility, and perseverance—required of any good workman —in the course of acquiring the skills needed for the job? Will it widen a student's horizons to such an extent that he can observe with profit God's handiwork in nature as well as man's in works of art? Will it provide him with at least a minimum of technical

mastery of tools and materials which are necessary to the adequate and proper expression of his ideas? Will it give him opportunity to cooperate with other students in the pooling of ideas, in the sharing of work, in the care of tools, in the maintenance of order in the room, etc.?

When we suggested that art instruction in the upper grades and high school is essentially disciplinary, we do not mean, for example, that a teacher gives a formula for "correct" drawing and then obliges students to reproduce it, that she gives instruction in the use of materials and tools for the sole purpose of technical mastery, or that imaginative spontaneity and free interpretation are to be jettisoned in favor of perspective drawings of great precision. Certainly not. This would be an abuse not only of discipline as we understand it, but also of the artistic freedom which discipline is intended to expedite.

The freedom which is necessary to a student's normal artistic development at this time of his progressively awakened intellectual powers is a freedom from ignorance, a freedom from fear of error. A student in this age is normally fascinated by the world of reality which gradually reveals its secrets to his curious mind. He can often find intense satisfaction in the knowledge that by means of his reasoning powers he can control things, that his mind can give the rule to his body in carrying out some action or in perfecting some skill. But in all these things, he wants to *know*—and to be secure in the knowledge that what he knows is *true*. Truth is the sole criterion for a mind determined to find its

WINTER SCENE, Age 12

Here again is a complete absence of imagination, coupled with much accuracy of observation. The model used seems to have been a photograph. Notice the consistent direction of the light in hills, house, mail-box, and shadow of tree. Such observation would be unusual in a child of 12, but is a possible result of following a photograph.

place in this world of reason. But should a child be thwarted in his search for truth, or frustrated by an incompetent teacher who can not (or worse still, will not) give guidance and instruction to facilitate his acquisition of knowledge or of technical skill, then he will at first hide behind some petty deceit which eventually becomes only too true. "I hate art classes. I'd rather read my book." Or, "But I *like* to draw airplanes and I don't want to draw anything else."

It is only because the adolescent's ideas about reality are more complex that he requires materials and tools adequate to that complexity, but he needs to have what he calls "the know-how." Thus the necessity for training in skills for mastery of tools and techniques. But this training is only a means to an end, which is the acquisition of a particular skill to make a particular object well. When a student has brought his hands and his tools under control of his reason in the process of making something of his choice, he experiences an intellectually rewarding delight which is a stimulus to further discovery of truth and to the acquisition of skills commensurate to it. Truly, freedom from ignorance, through competent instruction, is a legitimate right of students who look to their teachers to help them in this critical stage of the development of their rational and physical powers.

A child's world of imagination is surely that of artistic immaturity, and the world of developing reason that of artistic adolescence. But neither immaturity nor adolescence are adequate to the requirements of adult life nor of professional practice of one's art.

III. The World of Understanding

A child's world of imagination is an essentially subjective world, but the world of reason is one in which an adolescent deliberately builds bridges of contact with a physically objective reality, thus bringing into harmony the imagined world with the real one. When the bridges are built and the communication well established between the subjectivity of one's true self and the objectivity of the persons and things of external reality, then one may be said to inhabit the world of understanding. This world is essentially a composite of the values of the world of imagination as well as that of reason, but these values are raised to a higher order through their integration in the exercise of the disciplined human will. In this world alone—of human understanding—may one be said to enjoy true artistic freedom. It is a *freedom from superstition*, or from those distortions of truth based on irrational feelings of fear, insecurity, or self-importance. This freedom is a prerogative only of adults, i.e., those who have reached full maturity both in human life and in the practice of their art.

Freedom, as we defined it earlier, is an intellectual capacity for true and right discernment. Thus it is in ordinary human affairs and thus it is for the artist who is in full possession of his art. To discern truly and rightly in regard to his art means nothing less than that the artist possess what Newman called the philosophic habit of mind. To possess this universal outlook is not only to see things in their entirety, as things in themselves, but also to see them within the context of their wider human relationships. Thus the twofold concern of the mature artist: first, with the perfection of whatever he makes—which presupposes a fertile imagination as well as technical competence—and second, with the purposes, intellectual or physical, which his work is to serve in a world of complex human relationship.

Furthermore, an artist who enjoys true artistic freedom enjoys not only a freedom *from* that which would otherwise enslave him to fear, to ignorance, to human respect, to incompetence, to superstition, but also a freedom to *do* what his rational powers, supported by grace, lead him to choose to do.

For example, a mature artist possessing a universal outlook will bring all the relevant powers of his mind and body to bear on the problem of making *this* particular painting, *this* poem, *this* statue, as perfectly as he possibly can. Truly, the artist must lose himself in his work only to find that what is noblest and best in him has left its trace in the work he has done, thus making his work not only a deliberately planned communication of ideas through a particular artistic medium, but at the same time a subtle revelation of an intrinsic goodness which gives the work a radiance which would otherwise be lacking to it.

But the work of art, howsoever noble it may be in itself, is never an end—or rather, we might better say, a dead end. Although in the course of producing a work of art, the artist is concerned primarily with the perfection of what he makes, there was a time before he began work when he envisioned this potential child of his imagination as a thing to serve his own or his neighbor's need. Pre-seeing a work to be done within this wider frame of reference is a characteristic of artistic maturity, for the *purpose* of any work of art is the energizing spark which ignites the imagination, gives direction to the will and then results in the production of a work of art following a true course of reasoning. Then, having completed the work of art, the artist stands back from the product of his mind, his heart, and his hand to see it, not from the narrow but significant vantage point of his own delight in the work, but once again from the wider perspective of the relationship of this object—this building, this painting, this statue—to a larger whole in which God's plan for the world is paramount. If the artist observes—from the distance which a universal outlook alone makes possible—that the artifact is a composite of harmoniously related parts, he may well judge it perfect as a thing of its kind. If he can envision the artifact integrally related with others to make it a harmonious part of a larger whole, he may well judge it perfect in its use. A mature artist alone possesses the freedom to make things perfect in their kind and perfect in their use. He possesses the intellectual capacity of true and right discernment not only about means but also about ends they serve. Truly it may be said of the mature artist: the truth shall make him free.

To be concluded in the Pentecost issue.

HOW ART BECOMES LITURGICAL

by A. DURAND

PART II

IN WORKING our way towards an understanding of liturgical art in the strict sense, we have established the subject of all sacred art as the divine life uttering itself, either in Christ or, through Christ, in the lives of other men. Now this means, as has been explained, that all religious art is concerned with a life which has made itself accessible through earthly forms but which, since it is infinite in perfection, must remain hidden in these forms. *Deus absconditus:* the Church makes no pretense of drawing aside the veil from the Godhead. Our Christ is God himself; he speaks as God; he acts as God; but he does not, in anything of his humanity, lay bare the divine nature. Indeed, nothing whatever that is created can make us see God; so that, even in heaven, the beatific vision will become possible only by elevation of our very power of seeing. It follows that the Christian artist, in his images, must hold the balance which faith itself holds in the Incarnation; that he must offer us Christ over again, in himself or in his members, the irrefutably human infused by the divine. And we saw as well how the mystery deepens in the Eucharist, where the things we can see and feel hide both manhood and Godhead, and where again faith, and all the arts which profess to serve this faith, must cherish the concealing elements as much as what they conceal, since it is by them that Christ is brought so near to us.

There is a simple test, I think, which can establish whether a piece of religious art has overcome the great difficulties of which we have been speaking and deserves our veneration. If it is a good image and yet does not incline us to value it for itself, then it almost certainly deserves well of Christians. The point is that, when an artist has got hold of some true aspect of the divine life, and has truly presented it, he will make us value his subject far more than this handiwork of his which set us thinking of it. Indeed, in the measure that he achieves ultimate greatness in his picture or statue, in that measure it will incline us actually to turn aside, to stop looking at it, and to give ourselves to prayer. The better a religious work, the more inadequate it must look in relation to its subject. This simply must be so. The work of art which "does justice" to God cannot possibly seem as desirable as its subject. Hence a kind of humility and anonymity is forced upon the man who, having made an image of the divine which he sees and knows to be splendid, by that very power of his which has gone into it is obliged to acknowledge that, like himself, it is infinitely unworthy of its theme. This is probably the ultimate paradox of Christian art.

I ought now to offer the promised definition of religious art, show how liturgical art differs from it and also provides some hazards of its own for the artist, and so conclude this essay.

Father Durand is Head of the Philosophy Department at Saint Peter's Seminary, London, Ontario. The engravings which ornament this second installment of his paper are the work of Philip Hagreen of Burgess Hill, England.

But the doctrine in my last paragraph lies open to an apparently deadly objection which should be faced, I think, even though this means a considerable digression.

Everybody agrees that the images of our bill-boards, street signs and magazine ads are not good art. The reason is that they all have an ulterior purpose; they aim at something beyond themselves. Their makers intended that we should be led by them to prefer their originals: the soap, or cigarette, or cereal which they picture. They are deliberately contrived so that we shall not want to possess them, but to possess their subject matter. For this reason, though much ingenuity and skill may have gone into them, they remain worthless. When a bottle of beer has been painted in order to make a real one seem preferable, the real one always is preferable. And even when the theme is something far higher, like patriotism, justice, or any human virtue, if the work of art is designed simply to teach this, it may be dismissed as propaganda or didacticism. In short, it is an unshakable principle of all art criticism that the image itself is the precious thing. A landscape by a true painter makes us wish that we could own his picture, not the meadow, woods or cattle which may have served as his model; and this is because the painter's only goal was the perfection of his picture.[1]

And yet I have maintained that religious art, though potentially greater than any other, must have an effect on us like that of commercial art. I have argued that, in this domain, the greater the masterpiece, the less we shall wish to own it, and the more conscious we shall be of its immeasurable inferiority to its subject; that sacred art triumphs by violating a principle fundamental to all art.

There is a simple answer to this objection, so simple that it may appear at first superficial. Lest the reader be disappointed, let me point out that, in order to dispose of the objection, it is not necessary to show *how* the thing is done, but only that it can be done. There is no obligation upon us to exp'ore the mysterious processes of creative imagination, or the inspired techniques which go to the producing of great religious work; all that is needed is to explain why they can affect us as they do and yet be authentic images.

The key to the problem is the fact that the subject of the sacred artist is, in a sense, infinite, whereas that of the commercial artist is so desperately finite. The religious theme is always ineffable; it has a kind of absolute inaccessibility about it, as an unknown never directly knowable. "Eye hath not not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for those who love him"; and even our Lord could speak to us of them only in images. It follows that the artist who sets himself to deal with such things can find nothing in the universe too tremendous or too beautiful to serve as his material. Since he is obliged to make his image as great and splendid as possible, he enjoys the widest possible scope in means and methods. In spite of the requirements of orthodox doctrine and, in the case of the liturgical artist, in spite of the still more stringent requirements of the liturgy, his subject remains that which holds the greatest potentialities for his art. The function of the painter who is the servant of an advertising

1 *The argument in this paragraph is not altogether in line with the Principles of the Catholic Art Association Constitution. If one cause is of greater importance than the other three it is surely not the formal cause but the final, sometimes called* causa causarum.

agency stands in sad contrast. A stimulation of the appetites, vanities, or fears of men by skilful emphasis of the right physical details of the subject—this is all that is asked of him. One has the worthiest possible subject, the other an unworthy one; where the term worthy is meant, not in an ethical sense, but in the sense of suited to art. The image, we should never forget, speaks to spirit and intellect; the brute cannot even apprehend one. Hence it simply is not possible to make an image predominantly physical in appeal which shall yet be a good one; and it is this sort which is demanded of the commercial artist. The religious artist must awaken intellect and the higher emotions; the mysteries towards which he beckons are not subrational but supra-rational, "dark with their exceeding brightness"; so that, till the world ends, they can hold his genius for expression straining at its highest power. It is for this reason that he can rise above the law which forbids an ulterior motive.

Religious art, then, is the making of images which have for their constant subject the divine life. That life comes to man through a Son of Man, transforms mankind by the agency of men already transformed by it, and so invites the artist to use those human images for it without which he could not speak of it at all. But he must never betray his unearthly theme by means too natural or physical, nor betray his fellow-Christians by representing it as inaccessibly remote.

And now we may ask ourselves how to distinguish the art which serves the liturgy. Its general theme is of course that of all sacred art, but it is concerned with the divine life as becoming present in the great Sacrament, and this difference is one to which a good artist must be sensitive. The Eucharist is a still deeper mystery of faith than the Incarnation, and let us recall once more that it must remain one; the veil of the sacramental species is not to be lifted. The true liturgical artist shows something like an instinct for this principle and rejects anything which endangers it. Whatever he may be designing, whether altar, altar-piece, mural, vestments, or even ritual, he will cultivate an atmosphere of special mystery and awe and, in proportion as he draws near to the heart of the Sacrament, will abandon images for symbols.

It is this tendency to prefer symbol to image which is especially distinctive of liturgical art, so that it may be well to consider briefly what it means. First, the terms. An image can be defined, in a rough-and-ready fashion, as any object which proceeds from another and resembles it in a way that is significant. What this comes to in practice is that we never have to be told what an image stands for; the image itself tells us. The art loyal to the doubly hidden existence of our Lord in the Eucharist will shrink from so explicit a means of revelation, and will turn to signs which only the initiated can recognize. Such symbols may be quite arbitrary, like the *chi-rho*, or the *alpha* and *omega;* or they may actually be images, but images used as symbols. Examples of the latter are familiar: when we see on an altar, or on a tabernacle-door, images of grapes and wheat, of loaves and fish, of the paschal lamb, of the pelican tearing her breast, we know that these things are not meant to carry our minds to the objects of which they are likenesses, but are signs, in a kind of sacred code, teaching the significance of the great Sacrament. The spirit back of such devices is the same as that which led the early Church, at the beginning of the Offertory, to dismiss from the congregation all who

were not yet baptized; and the same as that which led the Eastern Church, at the great moment of the Mass, to close the doors of a choir-screen.

Liturgical art, therefore, is not just religious art carried further. There is truth in such a view, of course, because good liturgical work would show a still greater avoidance of the physical and sensuous, a more judicious use of natural forms, a higher degree of distortion, and so on. It is also true that it will be impossible sometimes, as well as pointless, to decide whether a given production should be classified as one or the other; a fresco, or an altar-piece, for example, may fully deserve to be called liturgical simply because it is so integral a part of a scheme of decoration that it is not adverted to in itself and makes a beautiful contribution to a liturgical atmosphere. But there remains the special function of helping the Christian people to offer the Eucharist which distinguishes liturgical art in the strict sense and determines its characteristics.

These characteristics are nowhere better illustrated than in the actual ceremonial of the Mass. Here is an elaborate action carried out by several persons, with a kind of choreography guiding changes of position, posture and gesture; with singing, declamation, a choir not unlike the chorus of ancient tragedy, elaborate costume and setting, incense, and so forth. But to compare it with ancient or modern drama, grand opera, or the ballet, is to see at once that it is worlds apart from all these. The immense difference is that the Mass is symbolic through and through, never imitative. All the complex action and splendid decoration is designed to suggest something mysterious, solemn and unearthly, but never to declare what it is. There is, in the Mass, nothing like a Passion-play, and our Christian instincts would revolt at any attempt, within the actual sanctuary of a church, and at the altar of the Eucharist, to act out imitatively what happened at the Last Supper or on Calvary We want what our Lord intended for us, the great memorial, the sign of what he is and what he did, and we want it to be what he meant it to be—the supreme test of our faith.

And it is consoling to observe how rarely, after all, Christian instinct does fail, and so permit vulgarity or sentimentalism at or near the Mass itself. Even the poorest of commercial church decorators often acquire a sense of restraint as they move into the sanctuary and draw near the altar. If they can not give us what we might look for from a genuine artist, that is, new symbols, and new images with symbolic force, they usually have discretion enough to fall back on the old signs, and not to attempt a distracting pageantry. Similarly, the vestment makers, more often than not, seem to sense that their duty is to garb an anonymous figure, the man whose own identity is lost for the duration of the Mass; who is not Christ, nor to be confused with Christ, but who shares in his single priesthood. On the back of the chasuble we nearly always see a symbolic reminder of that common

priesthood, and no more—a vine with its branches, a sign of the great high-priest's name, a symbol of the spirit who is the bond of unity, the bread which makes one body of those who share it, or something of the sort.

So we are brought back at last to the two chasubles which occasioned all this discussion They are blunders, I suggested, for more reasons than one. But the one reason which matters is that they violate the first principle of liturgical art. So near to the Sacrament in which he deliberately hides himself from the eyes of sense, and in which this very concealment brings him so near to us that we can eat him, it is wrong to desire any likeness of our Lord in his human form. Our soul's salvation depends on that bread, so humble in appearance, which he bids us to receive as himself, God and man. We must take him as he comes. As for an image of our Lady on a priest's vestment, it is of course a still worse error. The Holy Eucharist is in no sense a mystery of her life. If we think of it as a sacrament, a sign of grace with power to confer grace, and as the Sacrament above all others, since it contains the author of grace, we have to acknowledge that she stands in the same relation to it as we do. Our Lady is not a priest. Were she on earth, she would be found kneeling before the mystery of the Eucharist like any Christian, though not of course to seek in it a remedy for sin. The conduct of the crowds at Lourdes is plainly her doing. She brings them to her shrine only to send them to the Blessed Sacrament, never permitting any confusion between devotion to herself and that great sharing in the life and death of her Son which is the Christian liturgy.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CHURCH INCARNATE
THE SACRED FUNCTION OF CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE

By Rudolph Schwarz, translated by Cynthia Harris.
Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1958. Pp. 231. $7.50

MIES VAN DER ROHE, in his foreword, recommends this book to "any one sincerely interested in architecture". It is especially important for the architect and the parish priest who are practically concerned with building churches. It is important because it considers a church as the living expression of eternal verities.

And this book is timely because most architects and their patrons today consider building as a problem of copying traditional shapes, of derivitism, or else as an opportunity for performing new and daring architectural feats, or, at best, as a problem of serving a particular practical function. Architects are engineers and patrons demand only copies. Neither looks to the whole and its need and right to be a concrete expression of the true and living meaning of the divine-human and the human-divine relationship at the moment of public worship.

Schwarz divides his book into four sections. In the fourth and last section he explains his purpose and attempts to justify his work. His book "is intended to be a primer for church building—no more but also no less . . . A good book for doing must not work out the final solution . . . there are no

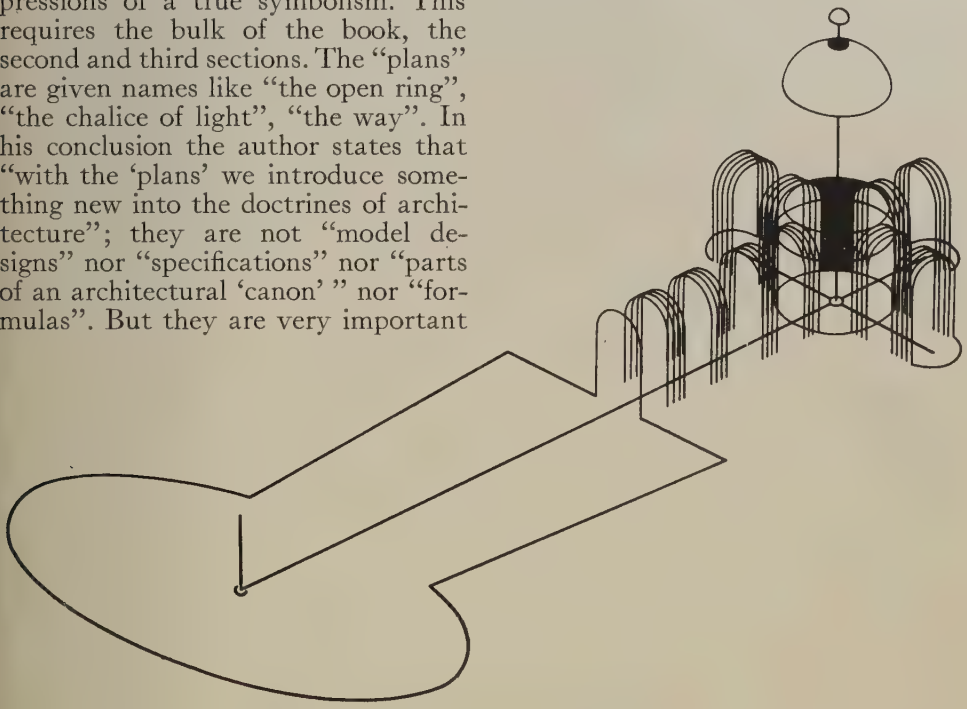
such things as solutions above and beyond history." In the first and introductory section he lays his foundation, he attempts to set the mind of the reader to thinking of the total problem. We need to take the human body seriously again, as medieval man did. On the other hand it does not suffice to work honestly with the means and forms of our own time. It is only out of sacred reality that sacred building can grow. What begets sacred works is not the life of the world but the life of faith—the faith, however, of our own time."

At the end of the first section, Schwarz says: "we have not wished to set forth a theory and we shall not now proceed to a practical application." What he does is present seven "plans", or seven conceptions of the church building, or seven general expressions of a true symbolism. This requires the bulk of the book, the second and third sections. The "plans" are given names like "the open ring", "the chalice of light", "the way". In his conclusion the author states that "with the 'plans' we introduce something new into the doctrines of architecture"; they are not "model designs" nor "specifications" nor "parts of an architectural 'canon' " nor "formulas". But they are very important first considerations for any man who would start to build a church today.

The principal criticism of this book is that it is completely veiled in what this reviewer would call Teutonic mysticism. The author would undoubtedly argue that the mystical presentation is indispensable to any true exposition of reality. But the reader will wish with every page that the introduction and the "plans" could be presented more simply and with greater clarity.

One wishes that the discussions of the symbolism of the whole church, shorn of its mystical trappings, might be extended more to its parts, say doors and windows. The Schoolman will be confused by the frequent and unaccustomed use of the word "form".

Thomas Phelan



Father Phelan is a priest of the Diocese of Albany, is President of The Catholic Art Association, and is at present studying at Oxford University in England.

MAKING AND THINKING by Walter H. Shewring
Catholic Art Association, Buffalo, N. Y., 1958. Pp. 103. $3.75

AT THE BEGINNING of one of the essays which make up this book, Mr. Shewring quotes a saying of Disraeli in Tancred, " 'You are going into first principles,' said the Duke, much surprised." It may be that many readers of Mr. Shewring's book may feel the same kind of surprise and even of consternation. For Mr. Shewring's criticism of art and society and education in the modern world is based entirely on certain first principles which are today generally ignored. But it gives his criticism extraordinary force, because he is speaking not merely as an isolated individual but as the representative of a tradition of universal validity. He bases himself primarily on the form of this tradition, which took shape in the mind of St. Thomas, but it is important to recognize that this tradition belongs to the East no less than to the West, to China and India and the Islamic world, and that it goes back in time to an age of primitive wisdom before any "civilization" existed. There is nothing that better deserves the name of a universal or "perennial" philosophy.

There is nothing which reveals more clearly the basic weakness in our modern society than the position of art and the artist. There is no real place in it for the one or the other. Everything "useful" has been taken out of the care of the "artist" and become strictly utilitarian, while the artist is left to cultivate his own personal sensibility. Mr. Shewring shows how in a "normal" society (and judged in the light of this universal tradition our society can only be called "abnormal") art was always for use. It is defined simply as the capacity for making things, and things are normally made for use, whether poems or pictures or tables or chairs. The artist therefore has the most definite place in society. As Eric Gill (to whom Mr. Shewring acknowledges his debt in all that he has written) was never tired of saying, "The artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist."

This point is of fundamental importance, yet I must confess that in developing this, perhaps because he has confined himself too much to the theories of Eric Gill and the Thomist tradition and has taken too little account of the Eastern tradition, of which his friend Dr. Coomaraswamy was the great exponent, Mr. Shewring has not made out his case as well as he could have done. It is true that every work of art has a use, but it is equally true that every work of art, as Coomaraswamy said, has a "meaning"; that is to say, it "signifies" something beyond itself. In other words, art is not only for use but also for contemplation. Mr. Shewring at one point seems to be afraid to admit this, but it is surely fundamental to this theory of art. The tragedy of art in the modern world is that use and meaning have been separated. A thing is either useful but insignificant like a

Dom Bede Griffiths is a Benedictine monk of Prinknash Abbey, England. In recent years his great interest has been the study of Eastern thought, especially the mystical traditions of Hinduism, and Taoism. His long-cherished hope of establishing a monastic foundation in India, and of living the full Benedictine life there in a manner consonant with Indian ideals of poverty, has recently been granted. This review was written from the Kurisumala Ashram, Kerala, South India.

telephone or an airplane, or it is "significant" but useless like most modern "art".

It seems to me that the most fundamental criticism of modern society is that it has lost this sense of the significance of ordinary things. In the ancient world, everything without exception was considered to have a spiritual or metaphysical meaning. It was not only the temple or the image of the god which was held to "represent" God, but the ordinary house and the ordinary utensil was considered to have a "divine" prototype; it was a reflection of the eternal order of things and was an object of contemplation, therefore, no less than of use. It is this which gives its quality of beauty to a primitive tool or a Chinese vase, which is lacking in the finest modern works of "art". I feel that if he had made this point, Mr. Shewring would have made his position very much stronger.

But it remains true that his criticism both of art and society is radically true and it is enforced throughout by an extremely keen critical intelligence. This is particularly evident in his essays on literature and education. Whether he is discussing Dante or medieval Latin or the Latin and Greek classics or the writing of "good" English, one always feels that he is a complete master of his subject. Here again his principles go very deep. In our education we are still guided by the principles of the Renaissance and we have yet to recover the original "catholic" tradition (which is genuinely universal). We have still to recover the perspective, as Mr. Christopher Dawson has urged, of the Christian centuries and see the culture which culminated in the thirteenth century as the basis of our culture and not the decadence which set in at the Renaissance.

All these matters raise difficult problems. How can this conception of education and art and society be fitted into the modern machine age? Mr. Shewring touches on the problem of the machine in a "normal" society, but it must be admitted that it is not easy to see how the principles of his philosophy can be applied in the modern world. That is our problem, and it may take more than a generation to work it out; it may even be that the two are incompatible. But in any case we must understand the basic principles of art and education and society, and that is what Mr. Shewring enables us to do.

Bede Griffiths, O. S. B.

THE NEW ST. BASIL HYMNAL, Edward C. Currie, Editor
Cincinnati: Willis Music Co., Selling Agent, 1958
Pp. xv + 335, 8¾″ x 6″ $2.50.

The New Saint Basil Hymnal is an excellent book. It has been approved by the White List Committee of the Society of St. Gregory of America. More important is the fact that it satisfies the requirements of the Church—beauty, holiness, and universality. Because it will be widely used, this is very good news indeed.

The chant accompaniments are by Dom Desrocquettes of Solesmes and are, therefore, as might be expected, in accord with the principles approved by the Church. Dr. Healey Willan of Toronto, who is quite possibly the best composer of church music in the western hemisphere, has contributed harmonizations of many of the good, standard hymns like "O come Divine Messiah" (No. 7), "O Sanctissima" (No. 126), and "Holy God" (No. 196).

The marvelous melodic gift of the

Irish, neglected for too long, is well represented. My personal favorite among Irish hymn tunes, "St. Columba" (No. 1043 in the great *Petrie Collection of Irish Music*) appears here as a beautiful hymn to the Holy Spirit, "O breathe on me thou breath of God" (No. 121).

Cardinal Newman's "Praise to the Holiest", *The Dream of Gerontius*, is combined with a fine tune by another great English Catholic, Thomas Tallis (No. 199). Newman's wonderful translation of "Nunc sancte nobis spiritus" is even more happily wedded to the finest of Orlando Gibbons' hymn tunes (No. 120).

The best of modern Catholic poets, the Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins, is represented by his translation of "Adoro te", set, startlingly though effectively, to "Noel nouvelet" (No. 89).

I disagree with the editors' use of the "chant" version of "O filii et filiae" (No. 41). It is the invention of a modern Solesmes monk who derived it from a seventeenth century carol in triple rhythm. Even the Solesmes monks, in the latest edition of the *Liber Usualis*, have replaced it with the older metrical setting in modern notation.

"Concordi laetitia" (No. 151), the music of which dates from the thirteenth century, is capable of more than one rhythmic interpretation. It is given in Solesmes chant rhythm with an accompaniment by Dom Desrocquettes and Latin words, and, very intelligently, in four-four time with a good English translation on the facing page (No. 152).

As harbingers of the cultural springtide we all hope for, anonymous Trappists contributed a number of excellent poems and tunes. Particularly worthy of notice is a beautiful setting of St. Francis' prayer, "Make me, O Lord, an instrument of thy peace" (No. 60).

To promote congregational singing at low Mass, there is a special group of specially composed hymns, but this is the weakest section of an otherwise good book.

The Service section includes admirably clear and complete liturgical directions (not yet revised to accord with the new *Instruction on Sacred Liturgy and Music*), Mass XI, the Ambrosian Gloria, Credo III, an excellent unison Mass by Healey Willan, music for the Forty Hours devotion, everything needed for Confirmation, the "Te Deum", the Requiem Mass, and the Burial Service.

Only five years ago, there was no American Catholic hymnal which satisfied the requirements of the Church, with the possible exception of the *St. Gregory Hymnal*, and every one agrees that this is overloaded with compositions by its saintly editor. Protestants sang fine old pre-reformation Catholic hymns, while Catholics used the dregs of nineteenth century protestant hymnody culled, or perhaps I should say dredged, from the old *St. Basil's*. Then the wonderful *Pius X Hymnal* appeared, and was followed by a succession of good collections, among which *The People's Hymnal* is outstanding. *The New Saint Basil Hymnal* is the best yet, for congregational use. All these books have their faults, but they are restoring to us our rightful heritage, and in them one can see the beginnings of a musical culture which is truly American and truly Catholic.

Paul R. Ladd, Jr.

Mr. Ladd is choir master and organist at Saint Bernard's Church in Wickford, R. I. McLaughlin and Reilly of Boston are bringing out his A Catholic Community Song Book.

ART AND NATURE

THOSE DEFENDERS of the avant-garde who attempt to explain the works they admire by reference to metaphysical truths, usually make the point that art is the consummation and completion of nature. This is, of course, in a sense true. Any skill which enables man to realize his potential humanity is an advance on artlessness.

But there is also a sense in which nature follows and perfects the artifice of man. Nature restores to order the horrors that ill-directed or defective skills have brought into existence. Ruskin wrote of illth as well as wealth. Fallen man makes artificial things that are bad for him (as H-bombs) and he makes things badly (shoddy). We have founded a system of production on the exploitation of our fellows, and on the waste of the resources of the natural world which God has entrusted to man's stewardship. Our fallen natures, undisciplined by repentance and unillumined by philosophy and theology, have created illth and shoddy, a human degeneracy and a misery undreamed of by our ancestors. As we spread over the globe, looking for fresh fields for exploitation, and while we dream of " conquering space", nature follows behind us using her own slow and patient means to clean up the mess our greed and barbarism have caused. The obsolete cars rust, the jerry-built houses rot, and even the broken bottles are at last worn into pretty pebbles by the tireless sea. Nature completes the work of art in her own way.

But we may be answered that this is not at all what educated people mean by *art*. The poets and the painters of the avant-garde are themselves in violent protest against this very waste and hideousness. But have the aesthetic progressives the medicine that will cure the ills caused by the commercial progressives? Is the arranging of words in new but meaningless patterns, the making of pictures which are to most of us unintelligible, the sort of protest to which the men of commerce may be expected to listen? And are we to believe that it is these artists and their works that are the ultimate glory to which nature from the beginning of time has been advancing? To raise the question is to answer it.

No. The arts by which fallen man can help himself to reach his destiny, here and hereafter, are of another sort. We find them practised wherever cultures based upon religion have flourished. The enemy of art is secularism in any of its forms. And in traditional cultures, where all men are expected to be artists, and no one feels the need to talk about art, it occurs to no one to challenge the beauty of God's works with the beauty of artifacts. Surely the perfection of the humblest work of nature far exceeds the perfection of the noblest work of man.

To appreciate the beauty of God's handiwork in a devout spirit is to worship God. When we admire the beauty of our own poor products, we are merely worshipping ourselves. If we decide for self-worship, let us at least know what we are doing, and call our action by its right name.

TEN YEARS AGO

ON PROFESSORS AND PROFESSIONALS

From the Editorial in Volume XII, No. 2, Easter, 1949

In all the discussions at the Christmas 1948 *C. A. A. Convention, at Mount Saint Joseph-on-the-Ohio, a question came up repeatedly concerning the training of art teachers. From the general philosophy of art, to the particular training of professional artists, or the apprenticeship system, or trade schools, the discussion always came back to the question "Where can teachers go to Summer School to learn something really sound while they labor for their credits?"*

BEFORE WE CAN SAY where the teachers can learn something worth while, we must know what is worth while. When we know that, it will be comparatively easy to find a suitable school, or even—should none be found—to make one to order.

Perhaps our main false premise consists in our thinking that an art teacher is, or must be, a professional painter or sculptor.

Now, a professional gives himself to the work by which he earns his living, and is thus subject to its discipline. By this discipline he acquires his skill and becomes a master.

A master, in turn, is normally a teacher. It is possible for him to teach others because he possesses knowledge and therefore he has something to give. This enables him not only to show younger people the method of his work, but also, because of his experience, to interpret and enliven his method with his wisdom.

It is in this way that trades are transmitted from generation to generation. Together with the method of the trade comes the lore peculiar to it. And, with his own wisdom about his trade, the master also transmits to his disciples his general wisdom about universal things. This wisdom he has inherited from his own master or masters, but it is often seasoned with his individual aphorisms. It is this wisdom and this philosophy which enable him to see universals, and to know that the work is useful in a universal sense. It is this wisdom also which makes the difference between the man who loves his work and embraces it as a real vocation, i. e., a call, and the unfortunate who struggles day in and day out with the dead shells of meaningless labor and has no wisdom to enlighten it all.

All masters, however, are not necessarily good teachers, because, though they possess their virtue, not all are equally gifted with the ability and patience to communicate its rudiments, to beginners. But, while it is true that all masters may not be good teachers, it still remains that all good teachers must be masters.

The questions then arise: How can people whose profession is to teach an art to others, do so when they lack the mastery and the personal wisdom that go with this art and which they are supposed to impart to others? And how can they become masters of an art which they do not practise as a profession? The truth is, they can not.

This may be a hard truth to accept, but if we will to be reasonable, i. e., humble, we must accept it. If we accept it, moreover, we shall understand the weakness of our "art departments", where the best will in the world cannot replace the authority of craftsmanship. Proper standards of craftsmanship exist, and can be taught and acquired, only in the normal world of production with its healthy submission of artist to patron and reciprocal confidence of patron in artist.

Since, therefore, average teachers are evidently not able to become master painters or sculptors, that not being their vocation, we should look elsewhere for the answer to what is worth while and sound for them to learn. After all, any one is bound to do a poor job of teaching that which he is not in a position to master; and so it is only reasonable to consider the limitations of our teachers. What can they become expert at doing and thus have the authority to teach properly?

What arts, then, is the average teacher able to master? Again, we must not be shocked by the modesty and humility of the answer. They are "the home arts", as Sister Esther calls them, "weaving, woodwork, metal and leather crafts, and all the humble accomplishments of the quilting frame and the bobbin." They involve the things which the grown woman is going to do anyway, to her sorrow if she does them badly, to everybody's joy if she does them well, —and the things which modern men are being daily ridiculed in the comics for lacking, to the loss of their security and authority. Simple carpentry, gardening, sewing, plain embroidery, baking, singing lullabys and folk songs, penmanship, laundry, plainchant, keeping family accounts, house painting, sharpening and care of knives, reading musical notation, basket weaving, clear and simple English prose, letter writing, cooking and preserving, simple drawing and mapmaking, first aid. These are the arts which the average teacher should not find it impossible to master and thus to teach to others with the simplicity and assurance of true craftsmanship.

This, however, brings us to our final question. Does anybody need to learn these humble arts which the average teacher is able to learn and profess? This is really the primary question, and we have neglected it. What is the point of the teaching? Is teaching an end in itself? Do we teach just for the sake of teaching?

In all our discussions, we are sometimes apt to forget the very children whose formation is the end and purpose of the whole business of teaching. Should a teacher go to Summer School just to learn some trick that will keep the kiddies quiet during school hours? Or should teachers be helped in training young human beings in those very things which they need to master in order to serve God and society? What will these children of these young people grow up to be? Scholars? Fine artists? Perhaps a few of them may. But most of them, by design of God's Providence, will be the poor, the ordinary people.

"The poor," Eric Gill says, "are first of all the masses of the humble workers—humble because they are proud of their vocation to work for their living. *'For I have seen that a man shall find joy in his work, and that this is his portion.'* These are the Church's poor. These were formerly the masses of the Christians, the artisans and laborers, the craftsmen, the peasants."

But "the masses have been lost to

the Church," as Pope Pius XI warns us. It is thus the job of our teaching that the ordinary men and women may be brought up once again to possess decent and suitable skills, and to find pious joy in the work of their God-given vocation, having, from their youth, been trained in proper and holy habits of workmanship.

Young people need to learn the arts that will help them find fulfillment in their ordinary lives. Those arts by which they may earn their livelihood, by being useful to society, are also those which they may embrace as holy vocations and in which they may find happiness. And so, ordinary teachers are exactly what they need, i. e., teachers who may be like real mothers, who themselves understand the simpler arts thoroughly and can thus impart their own good habits of workmanship and sense of vocation with a justly earned authority. And who should be able to understand this if not the Sisters?

An unusually gifted child, in the midst of others, will not suffer from such a program. Remember Giotto, the shepherd boy, who became a great painter. If he had lived today, his master, Cimabue, would first have had to unteach him all the half truths with which his school "art" training had filled him, before he could even trust him with the most elementary paint-grinding job. The chances are also that the lad wouldn't have wanted such a dull job (any more than the modern boy wants to be a blacksmith), and would thus have passed by his chance of becoming a painter. Good habits of workmanship in the arts that are *common to all human beings* are just as important, if not more so, for a gifted child as for all others. Instead of being subjected to an uncertain smattering of notions which his unfortunate teacher barely grasps—a smattering which he will later despise, if he does not despise it in the class room already—he should be formed into sound judgment and good habits in those common things which the instructor really masters. Thus he may in time rise above his humble professors, but will do so with gratitude and respect for the solid foundations they gave him.

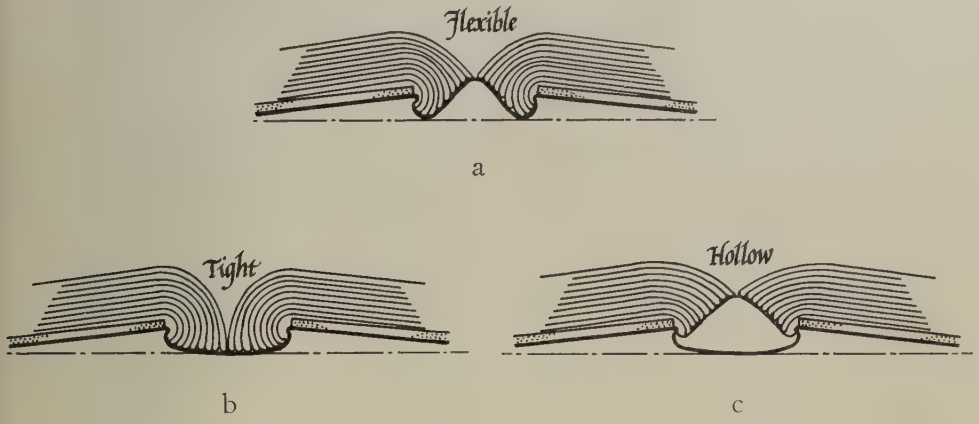
THE ART OF BOOKBINDING

by ANTHONY GARDNER, O. B. E.

THIS WORLD without books would surely be rather a sorry place, and although there are perhaps too many books and history keeps repeating itself, thousands of volumes must nevertheless be preserved by sound binding. Herein lies the necessity for the Bookbinder, since the machine sewing and commercial binding techniques will not produce books capable of standing up to constant use. This, therefore, is the basic job of the hand binder, namely, to sew and cover books in such a way that they will stand constant use or storage; and sound materials and methods must be his two principal directives. It is a happy fact that the materials now available and rational methods in the multifarious

operations which constitute binding are higher than ever they have been, and that "the goodness of the thing to be done" is the binder's guiding principle—or should be. One hindrance only remains and one, moreover, which the binder can do little to remedy, namely the poor and often unsuitable paper on which many modern books are printed, coupled with inadequate margins at the fold of the leaves.

Now this short article on the subject can not constitute a technical dissertation, but a few points appertaining to book construction must be comprehended in order to appreciate the *raison d'être* for the binder's basic methods. Bindings may have three different types of construction in the spine or back of the book, namely: (a) where the covering material (leather, in this case) is stuck directly on to the sewn folds of the volume and will flex upwards when the book is opened; (b) where the covering material is stuck directly as in the flexible binding, but where the spine has first been lined with a stiffening material; and (c) where a hollow false spine has been provided, affixed to the sewn folds and to which the covering material is stuck. These three methods, all of which can be thoroughly sound structurally, are illustrated in the accompanying sketch (below), and it will be seen that method (b) can be employed only where the book has adequate inner margins and the



Mr. Gardner is master of an unusual combination of skills. For thirty years he has been a professional civil servant in the Structural Engineering section of the British government, including responsibility for the structures pertaining to the coronation ceremonies of Queen Elizabeth. He is a national authority on steel structures and bridges. For services of this kind, he was made an officer of the Order of the British Empire by King George VI and awarded the coronation medal by Queen Elizabeth II. During the same period, he has practised wood engraving, calligraphy and book-binding. To date, he has bound 585 books, including many ceremonial volumes for the Royal family.

Figures 1 through 8 are reproduced by courtesy of The John Carter Brown Library in Brown University. Figures 9 through 11 are the work of the author.

Figure 1. Paulus de Sancta Maria. Scrutinium Scriptarum. *Strasbourg. Signed and dated binding by Johan Richenbach, 1470. Pigskin, blind stamping, Evangelists and letters in black and red, brass mounts. 11" x 7¾". Typical Gothic binding.*

leaves are such that they will flop open and remain in repose. The disadvantage of the traditional flexible spine is that for books such as Bibles and Missals, which are opened frequently at the same place, the leather will naturally tend to develop a slight permanent crease along the line opposite the constant opening, and this may, in time, somewhat damage any gold tooling traversed by the crease. By and large, the method to be employed must be decided by the binder as best suits the use and nature of the book, and any purist attitude, that faults in the make-up of the volume itself are not the concern of the binder, can not be condoned. An immaculate French binding was brought back by the owner after a few weeks' use, with a complaint that a faint crease had appeared along the spine; but "Oh!" said *le relieur*, "you have opened it!"

The range of work coming to the bindery is very diverse, embracing the whole gamut of jobs from the restoration of valuable old volumes to the binding of the quires of a book straight from the printer; from the utility binding to the superb presentation volume for a Queen; from a 14th century *Horae* to the latest book from the Private Press; and the master binder is a craftsman whose range of bibliopegic experience is such that he will know and can do what is fundamentally appropriate in every case. He must never be "caught napping". As Eric Gill remarked, all art is very much like hard work, and this applies, *par excellence*, to the binder's job: thir-

Figure 2. Book of Hours, printed by Philippe Pigouchet, Paris, c. 1498. Contemporary French binding in the Grolier manner. Black calf, gold and blind tooling. 8" x 5½".

teen hours of sewing a great Bible with two half-hour breaks for refreshment, and the repetitive impression of a tool accurately five thousand times being some of the labors that may weary him and excuse a little pride at the last. As Jacques Maritain reminds us in his *Art and Scholasticism*, "Art remains always essentially in the sphere of making and it is by *drudgery* upon some matter that it aims at rejoicing the spirit."

That a book opens in a facile manner and its binding is pleasant to handle and behold are things which depend on a number of related items in the binder's craft which are hidden from view, and one of the most important of these is sewing. Different sewing techniques are dictated by the nature of the spine of

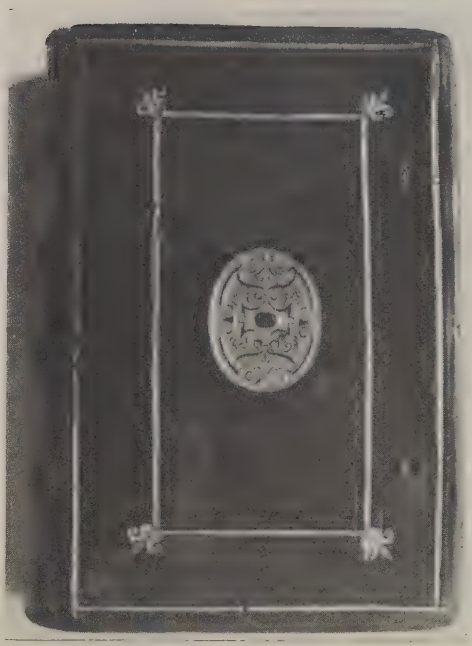


Figure 4. Liber Precum Publicarum. *London, 1574. Brown calf, gold and blind tooling. 6¼" x 4¼".*

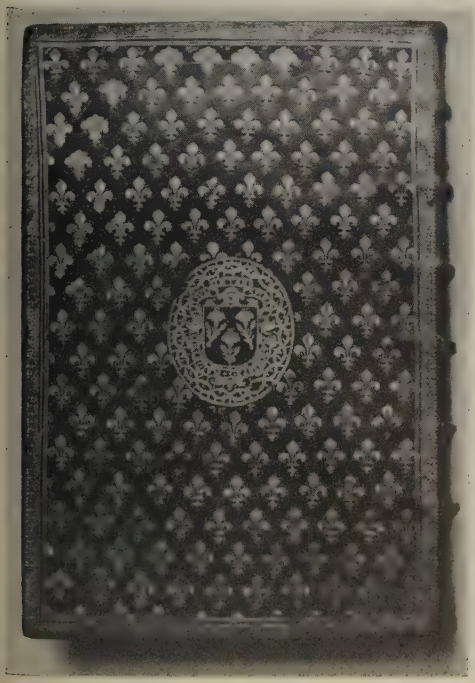


Figure 3. Simon Grynaeus. Novus Orbis. *Paris, 1532. Contemporary French binding. Brown calf. 12¾" x 8½".*

the book, to which reference has been made; but the essential things are that the sewing be accurately situated exactly in the fold of the leaves, be adequately tensioned, and the substance of the thread be such that the swelling which it must produce by reason of its inclusion in the folds causes an appropiate rounding of the spine. Here, the judgment born of an extensive experience is essential. A book can not be adequately sewn by machine, the subtle placing and tensioning of the hand-drawn thread being essentially human. The traditional posture for sewing is to be seated in front of the sewing frame, but my own penchant for accuracy in this basic operation dictates a standing position which gives me a clear sight inside the fold being sewn—and fortunately I have no varicose veins! The hemp

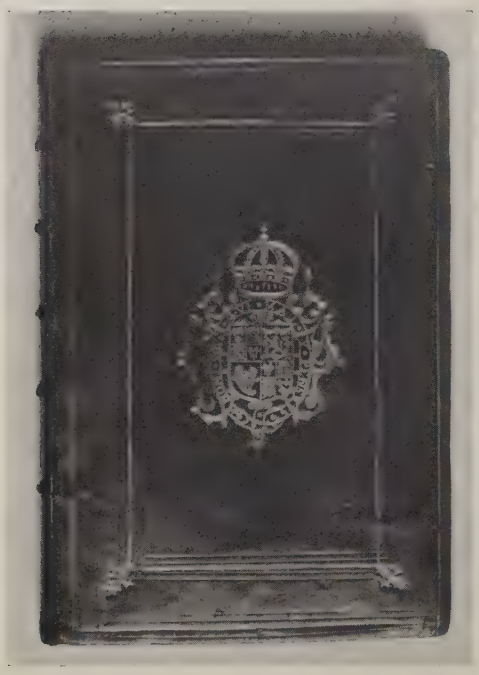
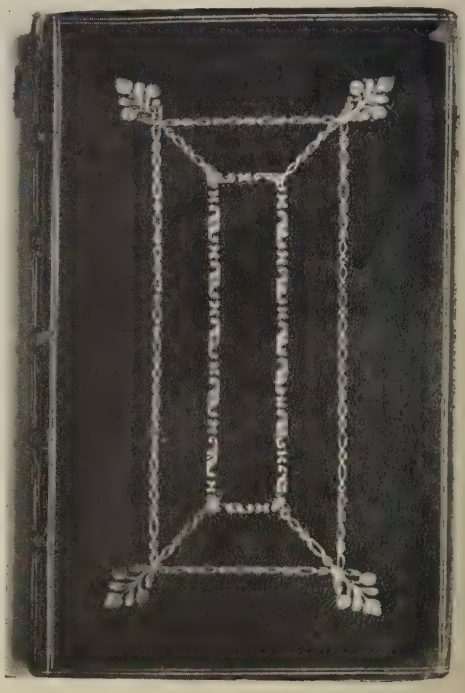


Figure 5. John Smith. True Travels. *London, 1630. Bound for King Charles I. Brown calf, gold and blind tooling. 11½" x 7½".*

cords or tapes around which the sections of the book are sewn constitute the hinges to which the boards, ultimately supporting the covering material, are attached, and these boards, which in early bindings were of wood —hence the name—are now generally composed of millboard. And the book having been taken to this stage in the binding process now lends itself to aesthetic variations; and here the trouble—the intellectual trouble —begins!

When Aquinas defined the beautiful simply as that which gives pleasure on sight, there was a great deal more in that than met the eye; for the depth of knowledge of the beholder is pertinent to the cognitive faculty, and in any work of art—any thing made—this *knowing* is essential to full appreciation. We bind the book in leather, shall we say, and the first decision must be as to color—the color the leather has been dyed, or its natural buff tone. Who shall decide? But a number of correlated things usually help on a decision, not the least of which may be the suitability of the color readily to take blind tooling, i. e., tooling which is to rely on a deepening of the color due to the impression of the tools, in contradistinction to gold tooling. And we are helped by broad notions of propriety, whereby we hesitate to use a garish binding for a funeral or a somber one for a wedding. And in this matter of the aesthetics of the subject, although art, as such, is essentially amoral, prudential considerations may actuate both the binder and his patron, and, to appropriate Maritain's concise definitions, "the Artist, who is

Figure 6. The Charter, and Statutes of the College of William and Mary. Williamsburg, 1736. Dark green calf. 7¾" x 4¾".



an Intellectual operating" may join hands with "the Prudent Man, who is an Intelligent Agent, acting well". But we know only too well in our Modern Art that prudence may be abjured and we have had bindings in newspaper stamped with the binder's naked hand and foot coated in red ink; bindings in sherardized tin; bindings in haddock skin, and those with windows formed in the hollow spine to expose the volume's nudity! And although we can not say that such bindings should not be done, and thus put a premium on the inventive faculty, we can maintain that they are not in line with sound tradition. It is unfortunate that in exhibitions of the binder's art it is the very extremes which catch the public eye and get singled out as showing an up-to-date approach, the general level of discernment being quite understandably devoid of the traditional and technical knowledge

Figure 7. John Moultrie. Dissertatio Medica Inauguralis. *Edinburgh, 1749. Green calf, gold tooling. 9½" x 7¼".*

Figure 8. Jean François, Marquis de Chastellux. Voyage de Newport à Philadelphie. *Printed on the French fleet press at Newport, R. I., 1781, obviously bound later in France. Red morocco, gold stamping. 9¾" x 7".*

necessary for the finer appreciation of both the art and the craft—of what has been done and *how* it has been done.

The problem is not easy of solution, for let us consider a typical example. A book has been "forwarded", i. e., taken to the stage at which it has been covered in a beautiful leather of grainy African goatskin, for example, of a color chosen by the owner. The rounding of its back is appropriate; it lies open comfortably at any place, and the cover closes with a snug flop when the book is shut. What then is to be its decoration? If it has a tight back and has been sewn on cords, this gives it the feature of raised bands across the spine and rationally dictates a blind or gold line, known as a pallet, on each side of the bands. This treatment is not only pleasing

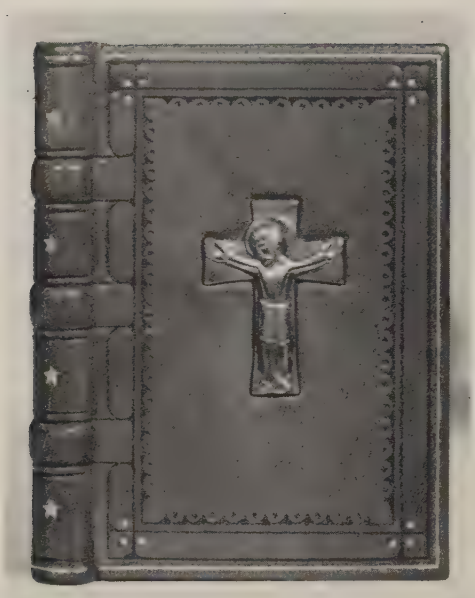


Figure 9. Communion Service Book, 4⅛" x 2¾", bound by the author in yellow kid, with leather inner joints; blind and gold tooled, with silver crucifix by Dunstan Pruden, let into front cover; has been in use for fourteen years.

but has the useful function of snugging the leather into place on each side of the band where it tends to shrink away; and so a few other treatments of this functional nature may be introduced and the structure of the binding may thus serve to rationalize its decorative features. And then a beautifully set out and cleanly tooled title is a *sine qua non*, but after this—who shall decide?

I think all art must embody a certain economy and that an obvious *tour de force* is a kind of aesthetic sin; and by economy I mean an appropriate relationship between what is done and the means of doing it. For instance, if I sometimes use a chain of blind thorns and dots, as shown in the binding illustrated by Fig. 2, my intention is actuated by (a), our liking for repetitive patterns; (b), the suggestion that this motif gives of the field of leather terminating at the edges of the cover and (c), that this pattern can be produced rapidly and directly without meticulous setting out. But the subject is too vast for anything but these brief indications in an article such as this, and suffice it to say that if we once forsake obedience to some kind of philosophic dictate, our waywardness may become unbounded and our ornament meaningless. And yet again I say that we must not stifle the inventive faculty and embrace a smug complacency with the outmoded ornaments of the past. We are helped in the direction of simplicity today because gold tooling takes a long time to execute and is therefore expensive, and twenty dollars can readily be expended on the decoration of one cover at a journeyman's wage, with but a small additional recompense for that part of the workman which is the artist.

To appreciate the many phases through which the decoration of bindings has passed during the centuries, we can not do better than to study that excellent review, *La Reliure Française*, by Louis-Marie Michon, Conservateur à la Bibliotèque Nationale, published in Paris in 1951. There you will find typical illustrations ranging from the beautiful blind-stamped bindings of the 12th to the 15th centuries, including those with blocked panels covering the greater part of the cover and often depicting Christian episodes; from the elaborate gold-tooled ornamentation starting in the 16th century and exhibiting many phases through to the 19th century, including those beautiful early examples bearing coats of arms on a field "powdered" with small emblems, such as those attributed to Clovis Eve. And then a waywardness sets in and the art ranges

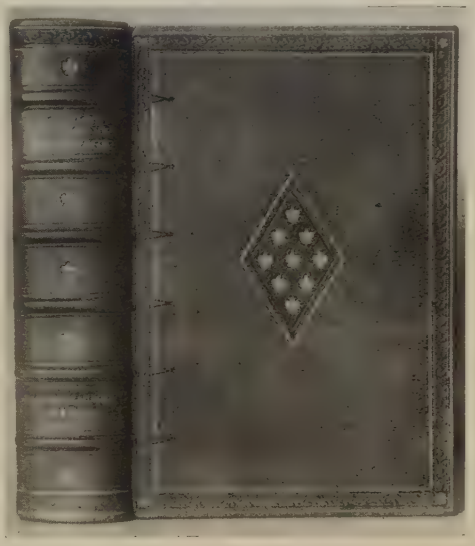
over a wide field, including the "cathedral" rendering in which an elaborate blind or gold-tooled motif resembling Gothic architectural ornament occupies the whole cover; passing through the so-called mosaic treatment, in which onlays of different colored leathers are worked into floral motifs with blind tooling, and a host of other variants, until we come to our own day, in which a wayward simplicity may be evinced by a front cover having a few meaningless rectangular lines and a large title of malformed lettering, or in the marked skill of a "Plastic Artist" like M. Paul Bonet and his team, in which elaborate onlays of leather are combined with waves of gold-tooling, etc., to form a voluptuous ensemble.

What are we going to do about it? It may perhaps be considered fortunate that the cost of binding often dictates the limits to what can be done, and it is unlikely that we shall ever reach a Utopian epoch in which the general run of book lovers can possess a thousand volumes whose bindings alone have cost upwards of thirty thousand dollars, and thus it so happens that much of the binder's work is limited by a salutary financial economy. Nevertheless, he may, every now and again, produce a superb example which so pleases him that he will feel it to be "above the price of rubies", and if you want it you must pay him much more than a workman's wage.

Much of the work of the past was poorly done, technically, but we must bear in mind that heating and lighting and aids to failing eyesight were not what they are now. The individual gold tooling on a 17th century binding may evince many slips and other imperfections and yet be enchanting, for again, as Maritain (loc. cit.) reminds us, art is an intellectual virtue and "the artist who has the habit of art and the quivering hand produces an imperfect work but retains a faultless virtue". *Per contra,* we may see many "faultless" bindings of the last century—the "furnishings" of the country seat, which are as dead as mutton, and devoid of all virtue.

As William Blades reminds us in *The Enemys of Books*, a formidable array of such enemies, from man himself down to the lowest form of life in fungus, is always busy, and it is sad to relate that the Bookbinder has had to be listed among the enemy's ranks. All those of us who have been engaged for many years in the restoration of books know this only too well, and the merciless cropping by the small town and country binder whereby the edges were given a tidy appearance but the pages denuded of their margins

Figure 10. A large quarto volume, 11" x 8", bound by the author in native niger goatskin and inlaid with a pale blue lozenge powdered with the gold fleurs-de-lis of France. An exampe of a traditional binding sewn on six round cords.



and shaved right away down to the very print, was unforgiveable. A letter printed in the Athenaeum in 1868 and quoted by Zaehnsdorf in his *Art of Bookbinding* refers to "these mangling wretches with their awful plough knives", and certainly this epithet is none too strong. But I think we may now say that the curse has largely gone. The restorer now has some useful technical literature on the subject and this, coupled with a proper ethical approach, can ensure the best possible results. The binder's most rewarding experience is to see the astonishment of the owner when he beholds the precious volume which had been crippled by age and neglect, restored to life for many centuries to come.

Let us then go on with this work which is a means of preserving the treasures of human thought committed to print, and to do that in a way which rejoices the spirit exceedingly. As music to the psalm, as feminine beauty to sweetness of heart, so the binding to the treasures it enfolds. Let the Binder have that Aristotelian "undeviating determination of the work to be done", and you the grace to reward him.

Figure 11. A group of ordinary bindings by the author. The Gauguin volume is bound in bright yellow goatskin with the edges tinted blue; the book of Epitaphs in emerald green, pink inlaid. The small book on its side is The Way of the Cross, *printed at St. Dominic's Press, Ditchling, and is bound in native niger kid. The bottom folio volume has a quarter binding in dark yellow goatskin with figured canvas sides.*

ARTISTIC FREEDOM

by SISTER MARY JEANNE, O. S. F.

PART II

In Part I of this paper, Sister Jeanne distinguished between the world of the young child, characterized by artistic immaturity, *and the world of adolescence, characterized by* artistic insecurity. *She pointed out that just as no one can become an adult without first passing through childhood and adolescence, so artistic maturity can not be achieved without passing through the liberating process of rising from immaturity, and through the crisis of adolescent insecurity, to arrive at the full measure of artistic manhood.*

THERE ARE PITFALLS on this rocky road to freedom from superstition, and we mention a few here only to set in relief the true nature of artistic freedom which alone is worthy of our serious striving.

The particular virtues of childhood should never be discarded; the simplicity, the imaginative spontaneity, the sense of wonder, etc. It makes all the difference in the world whether one is child-*like*, as every mature artist should be in possessing the *virtues* of childhood, or whether one is child-*ish* and remains immature because enslaved by the intellectual limitations or by the *vices* of childhood.

For example, a young child — his human nature being what it is through Adam's sin — is by that nature an ego-centric creature who recognizes no relationships to others except those impressed on him by the sheer force of pleasure or pain. Wise parents and teachers are not disturbed by this fact, but they consistently bend their efforts to changing the situation to bring the child within the orbit of his true relationship to God, to his fellow men, and to the created world in which he lives.

On the other hand, when an adult artist — that status being determined by an accumulation of years rather than by the acquisition of human wisdom — reverts to the ego-centricity of childhood, he is not being child-*like* at all, but child*ish*. He may become a voluntary slave to the natural vices or limitations of childhood in a number of ways.

For example, an adult artist (as distinguished from a mature one) may be intrigued by the pre-conscious scribble paintings of very young children. Because he admires a child's uninhibited approach to painting — which in its finished condition is completely unintelligible to any one, including the child himself — the artist ignores the claims of his reason and produces paintings which to a normal intelligence are unintelligible and to a perceptive viewer are artistically valueless. What was a normal artistic procedure for a child becomes an abnormal procedure when followed by an adult. In both cases, the finished product is proof patent of intellectual and artistic immaturity.

Similarly, an adult who like an

During the last decade, Sister Jeanne has held many offices in The Catholic Art Association, and is at present Chairman of the Education Committee as well as Associate Professor of Art at Rosary Hill College, Buffalo. Her Current Concepts of Art *has been recently published by the Association.*

Figure 1. Childlike work of a normal youngster. This shows freedom (probably to be lost at adolescence), but only rudimentary observation and technique, sufficient only to convey a simple idea.

immature child is unable to face reality and its progressively increasing responsibilities may revert to the moods and tantrums of childhood to subdue a hostile world into at least curious attention. In this class of immature artists are those who insist on cultivating a so-called "artistic temperament" which frees its possessor from social or moral restraints and which gives a gloss to unbridled selfishness. Others may attract attention to themselves (in the manner of a child who should be properly penalized for being a "show-off") by assuming odd apparel or peculiar habits of life, by shirking social responsibilities in their work, or by breaking into the headlines by fair or foul means, the more often the better. All these indications of ego-centricity are obvious marks of immaturity as well as of professional incompetence.

One final class of immature artists — and we do not claim to have exhausted the varieties of the species — includes those whose imaginative poverty and whose technical incompetence obliges them to remain at the level of a very young child who may freely "experiment with material". One striking difference between a child who experiments with materials and an adult who does the same, is that after a child has experimented with any material and has discovered, for example, what clay will do, he begins at once to make something for himself or for another out of the clay. He proceeds at once to use what he has learned. On the other hand, an adult who insists on his "freedom" to experiment with materials is worse off than a child

because, more often than not, he deliberately remains at the level of experimentation and produces endless series of collages, photo-montages, or paper and cement constructions — without rising to the level of vocational responsibility required of rational human beings.

In all of these cases we have referred to artistic immaturity in which works of art are made and valued for their therapeutic value to the artist himself without regard for the claims of brotherhood. It is an exceedingly limited frame of reference and one possible only to an insular mind which sees only those things which are of interest or of value to a subjectively orientated or ego-centric personality. It is a slavery to self and a consequent rejection of true freedom.

But it is not only possible for adult artists, as distinguished from mature ones, to remain in or to revert to artistic immaturity as an escape from reality, but it is also possible for them to remain in or to revert to artistic adolescence by assuming the effects of an unwitting insecurity. One example will suffice:

An adult who lacks the technical skill demanded by professional practice of a craft, may very conveniently become a devotee in the cult of originality, for if any work of art is to be prized solely for its originality, for its novelty, or for its difference from every other member of its class, then surely technical skill is a handicap. If all other drawings of human beings normally indicate two eyes and one nose, then an "original" drawing will reveal, perhaps, four eyes and one-and-a-half noses. If artists normally apply paint to canvas by means of brush, palette knife, or fingers, then I can lay claim to originality if I flip it on a canvas by means of a stick or merely let it drip from an overturned can. When originality is the end in view, it is of no moment *what* I do, but it is practically a matter of social survival in the art world that, whatever it is I do, I do it *uniquely*.

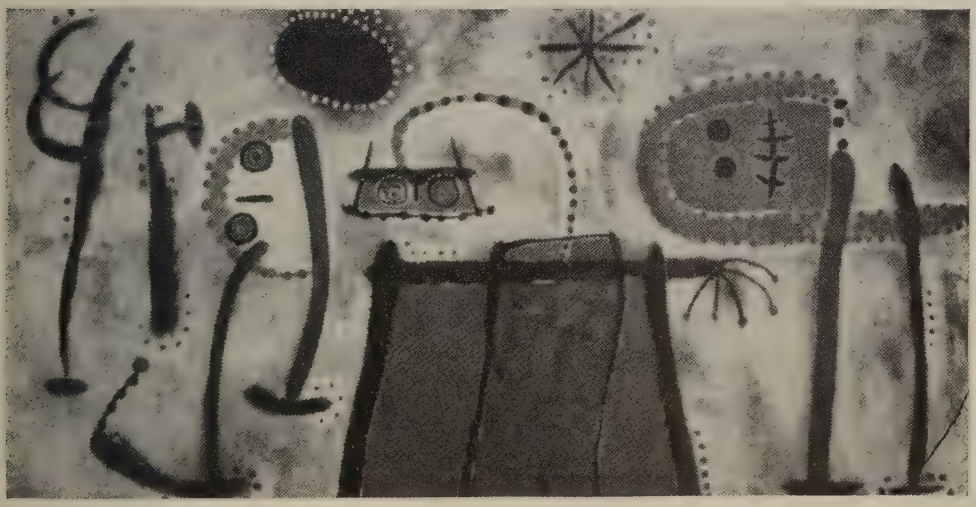


Figure 2. Childish work of an abnormal adult. This shows freedom, but ignores both intelligibility and craftsmanship. By Juan Miró, 1953. At present at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, on loan from the Guggenheim Museum, New York.

In all of the cases we have mentioned, the adult artists have assumed a voluntary form of slavery — a slavery which may be accounted for in terms of their immature, ego-centric selves. Works of art which are thus produced, directly or indirectly for the personal satisfaction or the self-aggrandizement of the artist, may be eminently satisfactory in achieving these purposes, but perceptive members of adult society can hardly be taken to task for recognizing such therapeutic art for what it is: evidence of stunted artistic development, of intellectual immaturity, and of vocational irresponsibility. Failing to take their responsible place in the world of human society as well as in the professional world of artistic competence and freedom, such artists are bound within the confines of their own insular minds which view only one facet of reality to the exclusion of the major issues of life, and they have reverted to the pseudo-securities of artistic immaturity. It sounds less harsh to call this immaturity "ultra-sophistication". But such deceits are, in themselves, a form of childishness, and if we are ever to become mature artists or professional craftsmen we must, as St. Paul reminds us in another context, put off the things of a child.

Figure 3. Mature work of a disciplined draftsman. A clear idea is freely expressed by a masterly command of hand and brush. Drawing by the late Thomas Derrick for The Nine Muses.

In conclusion, then, let us recall the true notion of freedom possessed by a mature artist — who is a technically competent craftsman at the same time that he is a vocationally responsible member of society. His is the true freedom of the sons of God: he discerns means and ends truly and rightly, not only in regard to his art, but also in regard to God, his fellow men, and the material universe. His universal outlook from the vantage point of God's plan for the world enables him to see things *whole* and to see them *sub specie aeternitatis*. The Truth alone can make us free.

DISTORTION

by GRAHAM CAREY

THERE IS A GOOD DEAL OF disagreement about what is called "distortion" in the iconographic or representational arts. There are some people who hold that since the purpose of a picture or statue is to represent some thing other than itself, it should always be so made as to reflect the appearance of that other thing as exactly as possible. Others maintain that unless a work of art deliberately avoids resemblance of appearance, it can not claim to be original, alive, or of its own period. Neither of these opposed points of view is easy to defend. The truth is a good deal less simple than either protagonist seems to think, and yet I believe that the truth can be quite simply stated.

I should like to set down my own opinion in this matter in a single sentence, and then see to what extent this opinion is supported or undermined by reference to the kinds of things that people make and find acceptable. My opinion is this: I believe that *images should resemble the things they portray as exactly as possible unless some principle more important than that of resemblance operates to modify that exactitude.*

It would seem at the outset that an image being, of its nature, some kind of copy of the thing imaged, the better the copy the better the image. At least it would seem that the burden of proof would be on those who maintain the contrary. Just as a falsehood is evil in that it tends to upset and deny the natural relationship between what a thing is and what it is understood to be, so a distorted image is a sort of self-contradiction. It promises to tell us a truth and then offers us a falsehood. And this is unfair not only to the man who studies the image, but also to the maker of the imaged thing. If an image-maker uses as his subject a natural or an artificial object which is perfect and beautiful, and which he has not himself made but only chosen, it would seem that he owes it to the maker of the thing to represent it as perfectly and beautifully as possible, other things being equal. He owes it to God to represent natural beauty as adequately as he can, and he owes it to man to represent artificial beauty as he would like to have the beauty of his own works represented by another.

But, taking the image-making of the world as a whole, there is very little that makes claim to great accuracy of detail and much that is wildly "distorted", and much of what is distorted is not at all repellent to the average man's sense of truth or of justice. And much of this image-making, twisted away from similitude, is seen by competent judges to be beautiful. Though it seems to have been the aim of nearly all artists of nearly all times "to make things look like what they represent", artists and their customers often have been remarkably tolerant of approximations, and photographic accuracy was hardly a conscious ideal until the invention of photography in the mid-nineteenth century presented image-makers with its challenge.

Mr. Carey is the present Editor of The Catholic Art Quarterly.

Many of the finest works of the past have been so far from photographic that their subjects are quite unrecognizable if one does not already know what is supposed to be represented. Here, for example, Figure 1. shows a highly abstract representation of a bear, which was easily recognizable to the Northwest Coast Indians who devised it, but has to be explained to us. The bear image has been reduced to what were considered its five most characteristic parts—ear, eye, teeth, front and hind legs. Such an abstraction gives to a figure almost the status of a letter.

Unless he were told, which of us would have supposed that the letters in the word DOVE were originally recognizable drawings of a door, an eye, a hook, and a window, respectively? Today, whether or not we recognize in these letters the vestiges of the original pictures of these everyday objects, no one is offended by the degree of distortion, for in such cases we are evidently in the presence of some principle more important than the record of appearance.

ure 1.

In order to clarify this problem, let us arrange these traditional exceptions to the traditional theory of image-making into groups. There seem to be four broad classes into which generally acceptable "distortion" falls. For further clarity, I will choose most of my examples of these groups with a common subject — the human figure. As human beings ourselves, we are peculiarly sensitive to distortions of our own bodies.

The first type of distortion has to do with the use to which an image is put. All images are not made just to be looked at, or not primarily to be looked at. The purpose that a thing is predestined to serve is what brings it into being, and therefore it is obviously more important than the exact degree of resemblance it may have to something else. If there is a conflict between function and resemblance, the function must win. (If the purpose of the thing made is itself maximum resemblance, as it might be in a photograph, then there is no conflict and no problem.) But otherwise exactitude of appearance must yield. A chess pawn is a good example of this. As the derivation of the word "pawn" shows, this simplest of the chess pieces was originally a little statue of a foot-soldier. Figure 2 shows a pawn made by Staunton, who stands among makers of chess

Figure 2. Chess pawn by Staunton. Originally a pawn represented a foot soldier. No one objects to the extreme stylization of such a figure, since it has a reasonable cause. Collection of John Howard Benson. Photo. S. Brady.

sets where Stradivarius stands among makers of violins. Elaborate sets have often been made, especially in the Orient, where king and queen, knight and bishop, are carved as naturalistically as possible, but no real chess player would use such a set to play with, because by it his attention would be distracted from the game, which is not essentially dramatic but mathematical. The little chess "man" is about as stylized as a wooden man can be, but no one objects to the stylization, because it is obvious that the functional value here outweighs in importance the resemblance value. And when, as in the present case, the pawn is perfectly made, we not only do not object but we take pleasure in its perfection, calling it beautiful.

The requirements of the material which the artist chooses give us a second type of distortion. To illustrate this type, we have chosen two carved ivories, one the figure of an antelope from the Belgian Congo (Figure 3) and the other a medieval Madonna in the Victoria & Albert Museum (Figure 4). Ivory is a precious substance and therefore not to be wasted. It comes to us in long curved tusks, which are hollow at the root end. To use the ivory for image-making, therefore, with the least possible waste, the thing represented has often to be considerably distorted. The antelope is unnaturally thin and is wrapped around on himself in an unnaturally circular attitude. In the Madonna, the distortion is much less, but the unnatural bending back of the figure of Our Lady is caused by the desire on the sculptor's part to make the most of his precious material. But the interesting point here is that we do not resent either of these distortions because they are not the result of an insufficient reason but of an intelligible and acceptable one.

A third class of distortions is due to respect for the means which the artist employs to reshape his material. We have chosen examples to illustrate this class from the arts of sculpture and die-sinking. There are several ways of shaping stone, and one of these is by rubbing down a softer kind with a harder. The famous "Cycladic idols" from ancient

Figure 3. Ivory carving of an antelope. Belgian Congo. Contemporary. The twisted attitude of the animal makes it possible for the sculptor to use a hollow cylinder, otherwise valueless. Height 3¼". Collection of Peter Cunningham. Photo. Erp.

Greece are a well-known example (Figure 5) where marble was worked down by abrasion with pieces of emery. Figure 6 is an example of the same method from ancient Mexico. In both cases the oddity of the figure is chiefly due to the fact that its surface consists so largely of concavities, the shallow saucers and grooves that the abrasive technique naturally produces. And here again, once the inner logic of this kind of surface is understood, the distortion of the figure is not resented as irrational, and we are in a position to enjoy the beauty of the image.

Figure 5. "Cycladic Idol". Early Greek marble shaped by abrasion with emery. Much of the simplification of the figure is due to the limitations of this technique.

Figure 6. Archaic Mexican example of same sculptural technique in a harder stone, producing similar simplifications. Mezcala style. Height 8". Courtesy of American Heritage.

Figure 4. Ivory figure of The Blessed Mother. French. First half of the fourteenth century. The awkward attitude is justified by the sculptor's determination to waste as little as possible of his precious material. Height 14". The Victoria & Albert Museum. Crown Copyright.

Figure 7. Armenian silver coin of the thirteenth century, giving an example of technical abstraction. Human figures reduced to dots and dashes. King and Queen displaying the Cross. Diameter 13/16". Collection of the author. Photo. Erp.

Figure 7 shows an enlargement of a silver coin of thirteenth century Armenia. In the whole pre-industrial period, coins were struck between hard metal dies that had been engraved and punched. The characteristic engraved trace is a line and the punched trace is a dot, so that the design of a pre-industrial coin is essentially a pattern of dots and dashes. In the most primitive examples, as here in Figure 7, the dot and dash technique is obvious. The reduction of the figures of King Hethum I and Queen Isabella to such telegraphic abbreviation is, in a sense, a distortion, but it is quite legitimate in that the means used are sufficient to the end intended. A coin of similar composition, Figure 8 (in this case the figures are those of St. Mark and the Doge of Venice) shows a little more ability to do justice to the human figure. Both coins, however, are beautiful in their own right, and the treatment of the human figures, because reasonable, should trouble no reasonable person.

A fourth class of distortions in image-making derives from the action of the imagination of the artist. All true *styles*, as distinguished from self-consciously developed *fashions*, are nothing more than habits of the imagination which cause the images they produce to have this or that stylistic quality. When a creative imagination works freely and healthily it sees images in a way which is related to its own nature as it is molded by inherited or acquired characters. Neither of the representations of Commodore Perry (Figures 9 and 10) makes any attempt to be photographic. Each was copied from the artist's inner image, but in one case the artist was a Japanese

Figure 8. A more sophisticated use of dot and dash technique. Venetian Grosso of same period. Diameter 13/16". St. Mark presents banner to the Doge. The figures are crude as representations of appearance, but the logical and direct use of the technique actually employed makes such a coin more beautiful than most modern equivalents. Collection of the author. Photo. Erp.

Figure 9. Commodore Perry the Barbarian. As seen through Japanese eyes. Nineteenth century woodcut. By courtesy of American Heritage.

and in the other an American. Dürer said that "an artist is a man filled inwardly with images." The Japanese draftsman envisaged the Commodore in terms of the images with which his imagination was peopled. The American did the same. We may find the results humorous, but we cannot resent them as gratuitous or egotistical.

These four types of distortion seem to me justifiable because in each case they proceed from a realistic attitude toward his work on the part of the artist. It is realistic to make a chess man of a kind that the chess player will find convenient for his purpose, because the true artist is always the skilled servant of his patron. It is realistic for the maker of ivory figures to conform their shapes to the nature of the precious material he has chosen, and not to waste it for the sake of an insignificant naturalism. It is an example of a proper respect for technique to accept in a finished image the signature of the technical process which brought it into existence, whether the technique be the rubbing of stone on stone or the punching and engraving of metal dies. And it is reasonable to expect that the imagination, too, will leave its

Figure 10. Commodore Perry the Hero. As seen through American eyes. Heroic bronze figure by W. G. Turner, 1884, Newport, R. I. "We have met the Enemy and they are ours." Photo. Erp.

traces on an imaginative work of art, and that a Japanese imagination will work in one way and an American imagination in another. All distortions that spontaneously derive from these realities are acceptable. These are the "principles more important than that of resemblance."

But there is always the possibility of distortions that have less respectable reasons for existence, and at certain times the use of such distortions may become fashionable. We live today in one of these times. There is no need, therefore, to show many examples of such works, nor to describe them. They are all about us. But it may be of use to people who are in the habit of accepting such work at its own valuation to analyze the distortion and to judge for themselves whether or not the beauties which are lost are true sacrifices to realities of a higher kind. In particular, one shoud examine the claim of many contemporary distortionists that their lack of accuracy is an example of the action of a free imaginatiton. Is it really an example of *style*, which is a slow organic development, or of *fashion*, unimaginatively produced, and capable of being changed over night? Is it true, or is it false?

Figure 11. Distortion of the gratuitous type. No reason can be assigned for this kind of drawing except that the artist chose to make it so. The explanation usually given is the eminence of the artist, which, as St. Thomas tells us, is the weakest of all reasons.

JACOB'S LADDER

by NICOLETE GRAY

THE ORIGIN of the Jacob's Ladder Filmstrips was a book for children which I published in 1949. It was called *Jacob's Ladder*, and consisted in reproductions of scenes from early manuscripts, with a short explanatory text. The illuminations were taken from Anglo-Saxon and English Romanesque manuscripts, and were chosen to illustrate the Old and New Testaments, and trace out the sequence of God's revelations to us in the Bible. The text was an attempt to describe the subjects more or less as the artists would have thought of them — that is, as their meaning has been interpreted by the Fathers of the Church.

I came to make this book through finding the need to present the Faith to my own children in images, coupled with the lack of any book or series of reproductions which were adequate, or even tolerable. I remembered a book of Old Testament pictures which I had known as a child — actually a curious and indiscriminate collection — some of which had fascinated me. I naturally turned to medieval art, as it was medieval history which I had studied at Oxford and which, indeed, first revealed the Church to me. I found material far richer, more sensitive, and more suitable than I expected. One of the things that I noticed, with some surprise, was that children of about ten and younger not only liked the pictures, but that they themselves started drawing pictures of the same sort.

At that time, I had never even heard of filmstrips. I first learned of them, I think, from a priest whom I met by chance and have never seen again, who asked me why I did not make my book into a filmstrip. At about the same time, my daughter came home from school and told me that she had been shown a filmstrip which had horrified her. I made some inquiries and found that the religious strips available, which were being shown in schools, were almost without exception of deplorable artistic quality, trivial or sentimental in conception, and incompetent and vulgar in drawing. I made inquiries, too, about the making of filmstrips; here I was fortunate in being able to take advice from the semi-official National Committee for Visual Aids in London. Though they were not interested in the religious or artistic problem, they gave me invaluable technical advice and introduced me to my producers, Kay Filmstrips, Ltd., who have been extraordinarily helpful and skillful in all their work for me.

I found that filmstrip production was not prohibitively expensive, and it so happened that I had just received a legacy which provided me with sufficient capital to make a beginning. This was later increased by generous gifts from Mrs. John Betjeman and Mrs. Peter Freeman. It seemed clear that here was a job that needed doing. If children are to be shown pictures as part of their religious instruction, these should be

Mrs. Gray is the authoress of Jacob's Ladder, *a Bible Picture Book from Anglo-Saxon and 12th century English mss. Faber and Faber, London, 1949.*

Figure 1. The Fourth Day, from The Days of Creation. *"And God said, Let there be luminaries in the vault of the sky, to divide the spheres of day and night; let them give portents, and be the measures of time, to mark out the day and the year." Genesis 1-14. Jacob's Ladder filmstrip, Series 1, No. 1, frame 5. c. 5" x 2½". Late twelfth century English ms. Ashmole 1511, Bodleian Library, Oxford.*

good pictures; and, more, they should be pictures of spiritual insight, visions to open their eyes to the wonders of their Faith, to God's magnificence and the fire of his love. To teach children to associate their religion with bad, or even mediocre, pictures must distort and weaken their faith. It is, moreover, unnecessary. In the manuscripts in our libraries lie hundreds of paintings designed by their creators for this very purpose of teaching through pictures made in a series telling the Bible stories, almost as if they had been designed expressly for filmstrip making.

Clearly, the next thing to do was to make some practical experiments. In this I was much helped by the Conway Library of photographs at the Courtauld Institute, which teaches history of art in London University. With its aid, I made a number of trial filmstrips which I then was able to submit to the National Committee for Visual Aids for detailed criticism on the technical side. But, of course, I needed criticism also from other points of view. For adult audiences, the pictures can speak for themselves, though one can help a good deal with presentation and relevant information. But for schools, it is necessary to provide them in the form best suited to the teachers, and for that one needs the teachers' advice. I also, of course, wanted the approbation of the Church. So I approached the people who have kindly consented to be on my advisory committee and showed them my material, which was viewed with a most encouraging interest and approval and also with very useful criticism. In particular, I must acknowledge the great help given to me by Mother Mary St. Thomas, visual aids expert at the Holy Child teacher training college in London. Then I had to get on with that part of the work which I feel is my own particular contribution — the research into the manuscripts themselves, a work which is, of course, all pleasure.

There are two possible approaches: either to take the subjects as one finds them in the manuscripts; or to take a subject which is a contemporary need (such as the Rosary) and collect illustrations from different manuscripts. I began with the first method as the simplest and most straightforward. I sought out great manuscripts which illustrated the

life of Our Lord, or the lives of the saints, or Old Testament stories, in sufficient detail to make a series. I worked, in the first instance, from the Courtauld photographic collection and from the expensive facsimiles which exist of a number of masterpieces, available in the British Museum. Then, whenever possible, I went to the original. I wanted four things: high aesthetic quality, spiritual insight, suitable subjects, and comparative simplicity of style. Since my primary object has been to provide religious teaching aids, I have so far avoided the more sophisticated periods such as the 14th century. This search immediately led me to certain manuscripts: to Matthew Paris's lives of St. Edward and St. Alban in the libraries of Cambridge University and Trinity College, Dublin, and to the charming life of St. Cuthbert in the British Museum. The most detailed medieval illustrations to the life of Our Lord are those of the German Ottonian school, which have also a wonderful grandeur and simplicity (Nos. 5 and 8). The most detailed Old Testament illustrations are those in the 13th century Bible story book in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, though this, unfortunately, is no longer complete, and some pictures are damaged. I chose the most familiar stories with the finest pictures (Nos. 3and 4), but there is much more material in this book and in other manuscripts illustrating the Old Testament.

Then there are the wonderful series of 13th century manuscripts of the Apocalypse, illustrating the great vision scene by scene (No. 15). Of these, the most beautiful of all is the Douce Apocalypse in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Where it is unfinished, I was able to use other manuscripts in this library, following the same set of subjects.

Finally there is the group of manuscripts which I believe to be the only direct illustrations of the Liturgy — the Italian Exultet Rolls of the 10th and 11th centuries. Fortunately, one of the most beautiful and best preserved is in the British Museum (No. 12).

There were certain manuscripts which I wanted to use because I think their pictures so wonderful. The Anglo-Saxon Genesis and the short creation series from the Bodleian bestiary (Nos. 2 and 1) were straightforward material, but the Psalms (No. 14) and the two Books of Hours (Nos. 7 and 13) were more difficult. I wanted the *Tres Riches Heures* of the Duc de Berry because I wished to introduce the romantic and mysterious element in late medieval art

Figure 2. Samson tying fire-brands to the foxes' tails, from Gideon, Samson, and Ruth *Judges XV-4. Jacob's Ladder filmstrip, Series 1, No. 3, frame 9. c. 7" x 6". Thirteenth century French ms. M638 in the Morgan Library, New York.*

which, as a child (and now) I found fascinating, and nowhere else is it so magical. The *Grandes Heures de Rohan* is, I think, one of the great classics of religious art. The Anglo-Saxon psalters are uniquely sensitive illustrations of prayer.

The problem of adapting the pictures made for a Book of Hours or a psalter, which can not be reproduced just as they are in the original but must be arranged in an order which will be coherent without the full text which they accompany, is half way toward the problem of finding pictures in manuscripts to illustrate the themes we need illustrated. It is not that pictures to illustrate the doctrine of the sacraments or of the Sacred Heart or the Rosary do not exist, but that they are scattered, used in unexpected contexts. One of the things that I am hoping to do is to collect and arrange these, working on the lines of Père Daniêlou's *Bible et Liturgie*.

A word about color. Many people feel that much is lost by reproducing manuscripts in black and white. This is not always the case. Line drawings lose nothing. Matthew Paris used thin washes which add little to his work. But in many cases, of course, the color is superb, and for all these I hope eventually to produce color versions. One can not, however, move very fast. Apart from expenses, processing from color photography has only quite recently reached the stage where the results are sufficiently accurate for one to wish to use it. Some libraries are still refusing to allow their great manuscripts to be submitted to such photography. It means fresh handling, which all good librarians are chary of permitting, for these are unique and delicate treasures of immense value. Some librarians are, of course, much more sympathetic and cooperative than others. I have been able, however, to make a wonderful start with the Apocalypse and Creation color strips, through the kindness of the Bodleian Library. The color in these, particularly in the first, is extraordinarily faithful.

My work has been on a modest and experimental scale, but it has met with wide-spread interest and support beyond my expectation. One criticism, however, has often been made: that these pictures are too difficult for children. This is contrary to my own experience with children, and in order to meet it, Mrs. Mary Freeman, a teacher of wide experience, collaborated with me to make our filmstrip *Visual Communication*. We think that our researches demonstrate that there is a basic similarity between the approach of the child and the early medieval artist to visual statement and symbolism. Since the vision of our children is so consonant with the Christian symbolism of mature medieval picture makers, it is our hope that the early familiarization of potential artists with these great works will prove of real educational value to them. Thus, as their own art matures, Christian visual thinking will be natural to them and not the conscious imposition of something alien from outside.

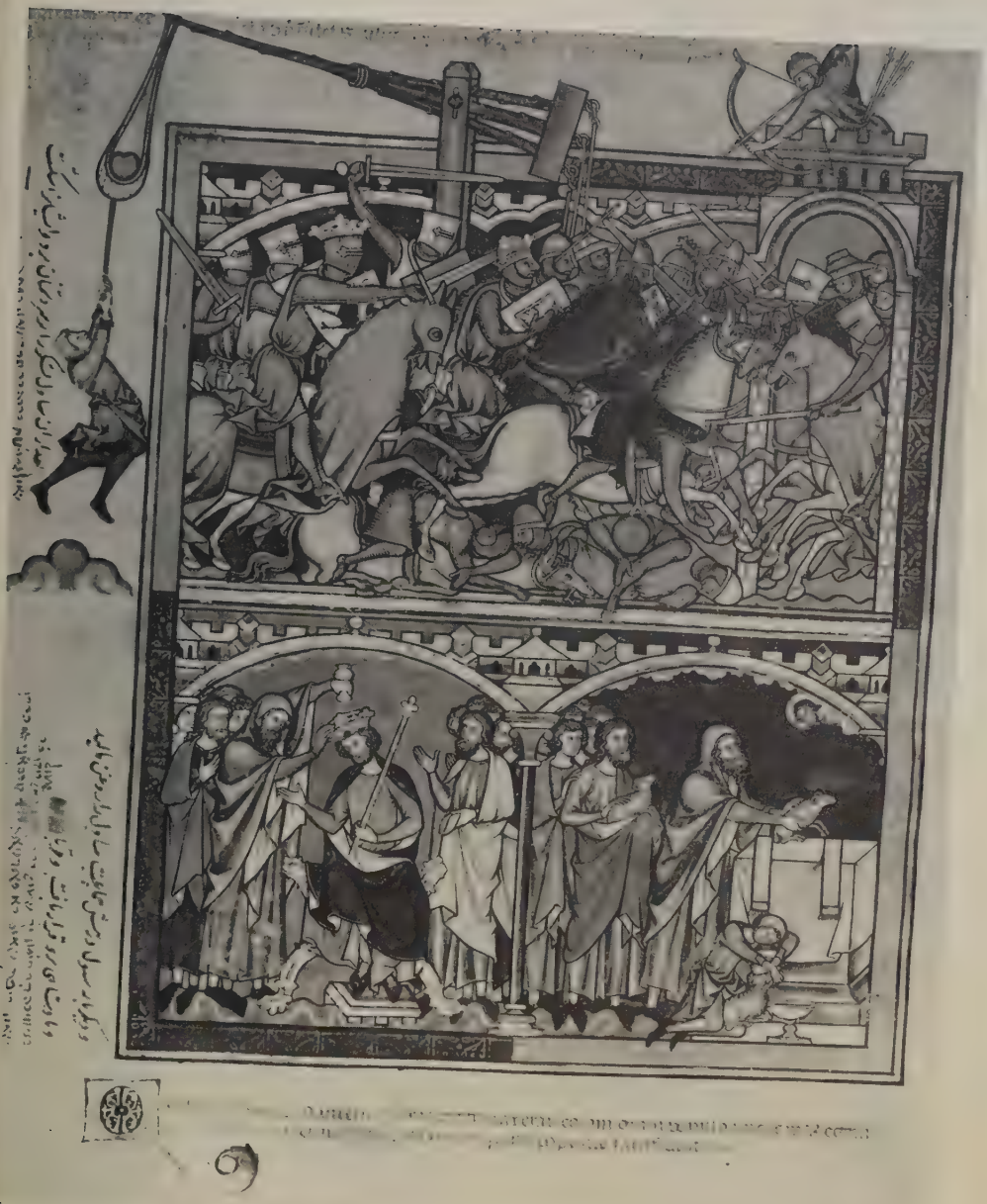


Figure 3. Page from the manuscript from which Figure 2. was taken. This ms. has an interesting history. Sir Sidney Cockerell, who published a description of it in 1927, calls it "the most splendidly planned and executed of all the wonderful French mss. of the thirteenth century." The book was probably made in Paris. Early in the fourteenth century it was in Sicily, in the seventeenth in Poland from whence it travelled to Persia as a gift from the Cardinal Bishop of Cracow to the Shah. Here descriptions of the scenes were added in Persian (see left margin.) In 1833 it turned up in a London salesroom, and it was sent to New York in 1916. Reproduced here by courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

COLLEGE OF ST. ELIZABETH

CONVENT STATION, N. J.

1959

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

THEME: "THE ALPHABET AS A SACRAMENTAL"

SUNDAY
AUGUST 16, 2:00 P.M. Annual Officers' Meeting
7:00 P.M. Registration

MONDAY
AUGUST 17, 8:00 A.M. Dialogue Mass with homily.
FR. PHELAN
9:00 A.M. Breakfast
9:45 A.M. Registration continued
10:15 A.M. Opening Session.
Chairman, S. GRACE MARY, Col. of St. Elizabeth
10:30 A.M. Welcome. Dean of College of St. Elizabeth
Slide Lecture, "Causes and Effects of Letters".
GRAHAM CAREY, Newport, R. I.
12:00 M. Luncheon
1:15 P.M. Afternoon Session. Panel, "Letters Past and Present".
"Two Thousand Years of Letters",
ARNOLD BANK, New York
"The Alphabet in Ritual",
DAVID, Monk of Mt. Saviour.
"Standards in Contemporary Printing",
ALFRED MUELLERLEILE, St. Paul, Minn.
3:30 P.M. Demonstrations
1) Pen-written Letters,
CRIMILDA PONTES, Bristol, R. I.
2) Brush-written Letters,
JAMES CASEY, Newport, R. I.
3) Carved Letters,
ROXANNE CAREY, Newport, R. I.
4) Silk Screen Letters,
REV. EMERIC PFEISTER, O.S.B., Latrobe, Pa.
5) Mechanical Reproduction of Letters,
WILLIAM CLADEK, Rahway, N. J.

4:45 P.M. "Scholastic Training in Musical Composition",
DR. ETHEL THURSTON, New York

5:10 P.M. Rehearsal for Sung Mass

6:00 P.M. Dinner

7:15 P.M. General Business Meeting

8:15 P.M. "Our Children's ABC",
MARY REED NEWLAND, Monson, Mass.

9:00 P.M. Compline

TUESDAY
AUGUST 18, 8:00 A.M. Pontifical Mass

9:30 A.M. Breakfast

10:30 A.M. Morning Session.
Chairman, FR. PHELAN
Awarding of Catholic Art Association Medal
Film — "Medallist at Work".

11:15 A.M. "The Italic Restoration",
ARNOLD BANK, New York

12:15 P.M. Luncheon

2:00 P.M. "Intellectual Excellence and Craftsmanship",
S. JEANNE, O.F.M., Buffalo, N. Y.

3:00 P.M. Three Simultaneous Panels. Each Speaker 10 minutes, with discussion from the floor

Panel One — EDWARD LITTLE, Chairman

a) Problems of the Editor,
MILDRED SCHMERTZ, New York

b) Graphic Arts and Book Design,
ANDREW ROBERTS, Linden, N. J.

c) The Printed Page,
EDWARD LITTLE, Providence, R. I.

Panel Two — S. LEONARDA, O.S.B., Yankton, S. D., Chairman

a) Introduction to Writing in Schools,
S. LEONARDA, O.S.B.

b) Lettering in Secondary Schools, .
S. ELIZABETH, O.S.M.

c) Calligraphic Arts in College, Novitiate and Seminary,
S. M. CLAIRE, C.S.J., Troy, N. Y.

Panel Three — REV. LUKE LINDON, Chairman

a) Words for Wisdom and Worship,
REV. L. LINDON

b) Alphabetic Pre-history,
GRAHAM CAREY

6:00 P.M. Dinner, Farewell, Compline

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 19, Tour to Union City, N. J., to the Convent of the Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary, to visit and see the work of Sister Mary of the Compassion, O.P.

This program is provisional and will be superceded by one to be published shortly before the convention.

AN ALPHABETICAL EXHIBITION

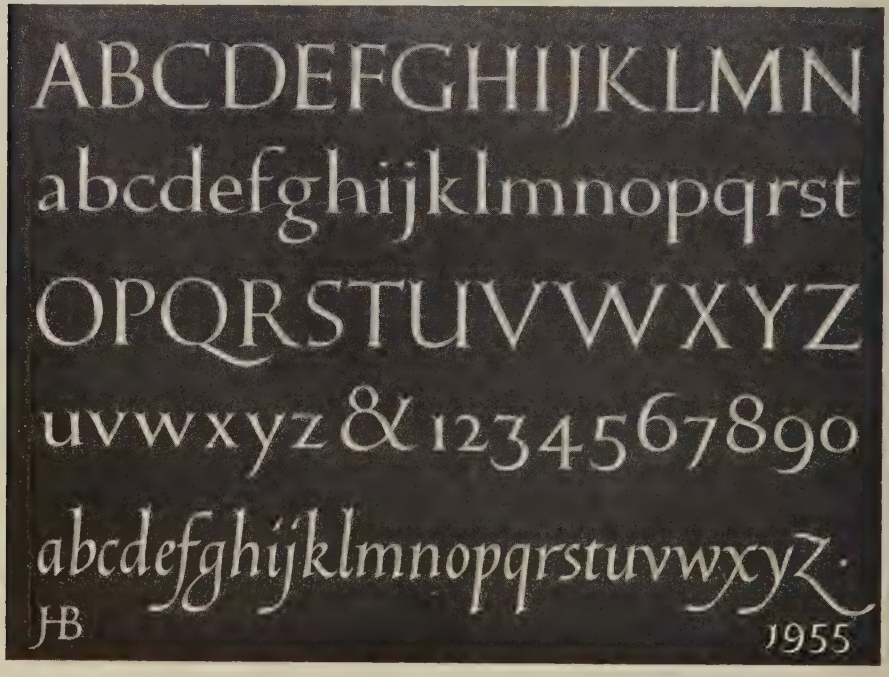
One of the features of the convention at St. Elizabeth's College will be a small collection of works of alphabetic art. Though few, the exhibits will be carefully chosen masterworks from the hands of men who were leaders in the alphabetic reforms—calligraphic, glyptic, and typographical—which have been taking place during the last century. The exhibition will have three main purposes.

It will provide tangible examples of the actual work of famous letterers, from England, Germany, and the United States, which will illustrate the matters discussed during the convention. If a picture is worth a thousand words, the actual thing pictured is worth even more.

This exhibition will also serve to do honor to our medalist, who takes his place here among the other laborers who have restored letters to their proper dignity as things to be imagined, made, and read. In particular, it aims to show his relationship to the reformers who preceded and inspired him.

And finally, the exhibits are arranged to suggest the nature of a true and living artistic tradition, constituting a chain of vital experiences, earlier artists handing on to later the fruits of their labors, and the later standing on the shoulders of their predecessors.

The exhibition has been kept small, but the individual exhibits are to be of high quality and interest, so that they may have the maximum of effect with the minimum of fatigue.



Alphabet cut in black Monson Maine slate. Newport, R. I. Width c. 26".

NORMAL & ABNORMAL ART

THE DISTINCTION between normal and abnormal art, between work that is religious and that which is secular, is much confused. Many take the simple view that what they are used to is right and what differs from that is wrong, or that this question is one of degree.

The difference between normal and abnormal making is not one of personal preference, nor is it a mere difference of degree. There is as clear and objective a difference of kind as there is between oxygen and iron.

Everything that exists is a certain kind of thing, and has its own nature — an intelligible formal cause. Everything also has relationships to other things, serving and being served by them. In these relationships we find its purpose or final cause. What a thing *is* and what it *achieves* are indissolubly wedded together. Species and action, formality and finality, are but two aspects of one being.

What is true in nature — the universe of things made directly by God —is also true in the world of artificial things, made by man's deliberate agency. Every artificial thing also has a definite nature and serves a definite purpose. To the extent that its nature and purpose are ill-defined it fails to be an artifact at all, and exists as a mere quantity of matter, formless and without destination. To be right, a human product must be *true* to its form and *good* for its use.

But we men are so constituted that when we engage to make something— a boat, a bell, or a sonata for strings— we become enthralled by the problem of perfecting that thing's nature, and tend to forget the service for which that nature exists. Artists, as we say, are interested naturally in formal causes, and can only by an effort of the will keep final causes in mind.

But these final causes are the good of the work, the *finis operis*, the end the work exists to achieve, and the artist's first purpose in working must obviously be that achievement. He will, of course, have many other secondary ends in view—his wages, his enjoyment, his reputation. As long as these are kept secondary, such motives for working are, of course, perfectly legitimate. Only when they are put first, and dethrone the good of the work, does the operation become secular and abnormal. The soldier who runs away because he prefers safety to his duty, the hospital that is organized for the convenience of staff rather than patient, the manufacturer who "builds in obsolescence" — these are examples of the primacy of the secondary.

The true artist may be compared to the man with normal sight who is able to superimpose the two images which his two eyes bring to his brain. If he can get the object he is looking at "in focus" he sees a true view of it, three-dimensional as it is three-dimensional. If he cannot focus his eyes he sees two images, flat and unrelated. It is the drunkard's vision.

Such is the artist's task, to identify his own purpose in making a thing with the good for which that kind of thing exists. He must will its ability to function—the boat to swim, the bell to call, the sonata to uplift the heart. Only so can he be considered a normal or religious artist.

TABERNACLE AND ALTAR

by ADE BETHUNE

ALTHOUGH MUCH HAS been written about celebrating Holy Mass at an altar facing the people, there is a frequent objection which has not, to my knowledge, received sufficient treatment.

The objection has been clearly expressed by Father Joseph Loew, C.SS.R. "A tabernacle in the wall of the apse *behind* the altar when the latter is *versus populum,* forces the celebrant to turn his back constantly to the Blessed Sacrament. . . If Christ in the Sacrament is Lord of the house, then He must be respected at all times, including the time of celebration of Mass." (*Worship,* Vol. XXXI, 10, Nov. 1957; and quoted in a communication, Vol. XXXIII, IV, March 1959, p.260).

No one would disagree with the general thought expressed in the above quotation. A question hinges, however, upon the premise that it is universally disrespectful to some one or something to turn one's back to it. Most people would accept the premise as an axiom, without further investigation. I should therefore like to question it from three aspects: from human nature, from current practice in the Roman Rite, and from its history.

To begin with human nature. The "front" of the human body includes man's most precious, sacred, personal organs, especially those of the face: the eyes ("windows of the soul"), the nostrils (cf., "the breath of life" and "the fragrance of holiness") and the mouth ("voice", "utterance", "the Word", "out of the fulness of the heart, the mouth speaks", etc.).

In presenting our face openly to some one, we honor him with the fulness of our humanity. But if we are annoyed with him, we express our disapproval, possibly our disdain, by turning our back upon him, to deprive him of the radiance of our countenance and allow him to grovel in the dark. Such is the spontaneous and expressive language of gesture (1).

Primarily, then, the back implies a lack of interest or respect, or even plain disdain. But is this essentially, universally so? We can probably all think of a variety of circumstances where it may seem natural not to face a person — even sometimes an important person — and no offense is taken. A herald speaking in the king's name to the people, a student returning to his seat after having come up to recite or to receive his diploma, an officer leading his men into action, people walking in a parade or a procession, a child being sent on an errand, a liege prostrate before his lord, etc. — all these show the need for a certain flexibility in movement or in special situations of human life. Yet throughout, the fact remains that, despite possible exceptions, we usually avoid turning our back upon a person whom we respect. And in particular, on formal occasions, when that person is presiding — i.e. (*prae* + *sedere*) seated in first place — we do not turn our back upon him at all.

Now, an examination of the Roman Rite shows that it honors

the presence of our Lord in the eucharistic Sacrament in two fairly distinct ways. When the tabernacle is open or the Sacred Host is exposed in the monstrance, the Rite considers Christ as liturgically presiding. Thus the priest steps to the side when turning around to face the people, e.g., at the Absolution before distributing Holy Communion.

When the doors of the tabernacle are closed, the Blessed Sacrament is not liturgically considered as presiding. So, when the priest greets the people at the *Dominus vobiscum* and at the Blessing, he merely turns his back upon the closed and veiled tabernacle. So used are we to this action that it occurs to no one to be shocked at a possible impropriety. The simple fact is that no one presides from behind closed doors.

A similar distinction is made in the manner of genuflecting. The single genuflexion marks the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist. The double genuflexion, under certain circumstances, when the tabernacle is open or the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the monstrance, implies that the Lord is not only present, but is also considered as presiding.

At the *Ecce Agnus Dei,* the priest turns his back upon the open tabernacle (2). What else can he do? What else should he do? To turn these questions into a fetish would be absurd. The fact is that the Lord is now presiding from the sacred Host which the priest is holding up to show the people. It should be no more difficult than that.

Finally, let me mention briefly a contribution of history to this discussion. In some of the early basilicas, the bishop's throne is still visible today in its original position — a marble seat, built as a judge's seat, in the center of the apse and facing the entire basilica. While the Scriptures were being read and psalms sung from pulpits on the sides, the bishop presided from his throne.

It is believed that, after the catechumens had been dismissed, a portable altar was brought in and placed in front of the bishop (3). Later on, this altar became permanent. Rising then from his "chair", his *cathedra,* the bishop proceeded directly to the altar, still facing his flock as he celebrated the sacred mysteries *coram populo.*

Today's rubrics still express this early custom, and we can see why in a basilica like San Clemente. Through the Mass of the Catechumens, the bishop's ministers do not stand directly in front of him. The Epistle is read on one side, the Gospel on the other. But in the second part of the Mass, the ceremonial expresses another thought. Now the bishop himself officiates, right in the middle of the altar. For the bishop is a visible and living presence of Christ on earth. He is one of "the twelve" consecrated with our Lord's power to teach, rule, bless, heal, anoint, and offer sacrifice in His name.

Today, every priest is ordained to celebrate Holy Mass, a function formerly that of the bishop alone. Today, then, let us suppose the celebrant in the classical position of the bishop, standing at the altar facing the people. The tabernacle is behind him upon a separate altar (4), slightly raised and honored with suitable proportion and decoration, in the position of the original bishop's throne. During the Mass of the Catechumens, the celebrant speaks for the Lord, but he is not the Lord. He stands on the side (Oration, Epistle, Gospel, Sermon). He kisses the altar, not without respect for the presence

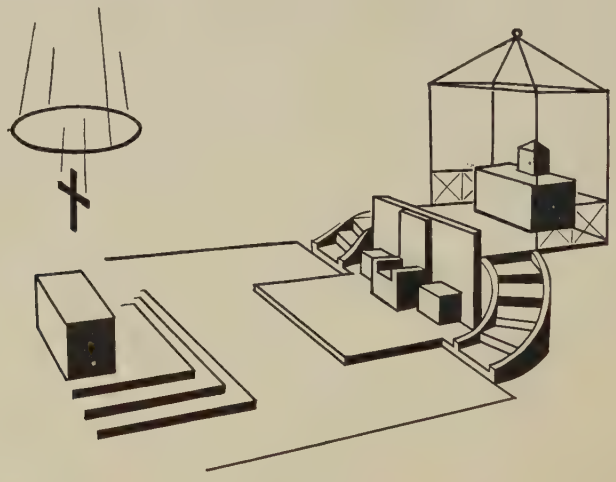
of the Lord in the reserved Species, but as a profound mark of respect for the fact that "the altar is Christ", that the eternal Sacrifice is to be made present here, at this very spot, and during these sacred moments.

During the holy Sacrifice proper, however, the celebrant acts as Christ himself, identical with Christ. He stands in the middle. The Last Supper is made present, and in it, the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord. Christ is not only present, as behind closed doors, but is liturgically considered as presiding from the altar.

For this reason, during the Devotion of the Forty Hours, a veil is drawn before the monstrance where the eucharistic Sacrament is exposed. Far from being a "palliative" this veil (5) is a formal sign that the Lord, present here, is presiding from the altar where Holy Mass is being offered.

In early days, the Blessed Sacrament was reserved by being, literally, hidden in the *secretarium*, a room for the safe-keeping of precious and sacred things, the antecedent of today's sacristy. But in our time, the reasons for hiding the sacred signs which were necessary for the first Christians, are no longer valid. Today, we openly display the cross and crucifix; we do not hide the book of the Gospels; and while sacred vessels (for obvious reasons) are still kept under lock and key, and the tabernacle is securely fastened and closed, we do place the latter conspicuously in full view of the public. Such are the fruits of liberty. Only an absurd antiquarianism, or a severe persecution, would deprive us of these benefits.

Today, then, the Church wants the tabernacle to be clearly visible and given appropriate honor. But there does not seem to me to be any contradiction in terms between this honor and the placement of the tabernacle upon an altar of reservation on the main axis of the apse, and behind the altar facing the people. Even in a cathedral, this altar of reservation, behind and a little above the ancient bishop's throne, may well be the answer to the Church's desire both for honor of the tabernacle in terms of today's devotion, and for a renewal of the traditions from the earliest centuries of Christianity.



Note 1.

It is interesting to notice, in this context, that the traditions of the modern theater are related to those of Byzantine (or classical early Christian) iconography. In "portrait" icons, the saints are represented full face, because their icon makes them present (in a formal sense) and so they face the spectator. In the "scene" icons, figures are shown only full front or, if movement is necessary, from a modified profile or three-quarter view. The causes for this are the frontality mentioned above, and also the very practical reason that a human figure drawn from the back, especially in the conceptual techniques of the ancients, is hardly distinguishable from a mound or lump of earth, or a sack of corn. On the modern stage, also, the actors go through a great deal of ingenious planning to arrange their scenes so that each actor in turn may face the audience while he is speaking. Here too there is a practical reason: the voice must be thrown in the directon of the listeners if it is to be audible to the ticket-holder in the farthest seat. Incidentally, the movie technique, with its microphones and flexible lighting, renders this rule unnecessary.

Note 2.

Although the tabernacle should be closed during the distribution of Holy Communion, to handle a key efficiently at that time of Mass is hardly possible for the celebrant. When the tabernacle door does not willingly stay closed without being locked (a prevalent condition, it would seem) it simply stays open. But, even with the tabernacle closed, there are still occasions (e. g. consecrating a large altar bread for Benediction) when the Blessed Sacrament is on the altar during the *Ecce Agnus Dei* and the distribution of Holy Communion.

Note 3.

This altar must originally have been but a fairly small table, round or square, with no "sides" in the sense of "Epistle side" and "Gospel side", the Scriptures being read from separate lecterns. But today's architectural trend towards a smaller square altar, a return to its early dimensions, could easily be exaggerated. Today, the celebrant should find it possible to take two normal paces from the center to either side with a resolved "one, two, three" rhythm (i.e., "pace, pace, turn") in order to make a meaningful minimum procession. Every one is agreed that a three-and-a-half foot distance on each side is just about right. Were this walking movement to be further reduced, it would eventually disappear and the celebrant would in time be reading the Scriptures from the center of the altar, the place of the Sacrifice, with only a slight turning towards the missal. Unless the small altar revival is accompanied by a rubrical return to the use of separate lecterns, it can bear no real logic. Instead, it only presages an eventual loss of articulation in the distinct parts of the Roman Rite.

Note 4.

A tabernacle in the wall of the apse was forbidden by the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, dated June 1, 1957. This decree specifies that the tabernacle must be securely fastened to an altar, either the only altar of the church, if there be but one (which then precludes the saying of Mass facing the people) or another altar. It must be possible to say Mass at the altar of reservation. Tabernacles in the wall, on columns, in Sacrament houses, etc., unless sanctioned by long use in a particular place, are no longer allowed.

Note 5.

Every one knows that the Lord is present behind this veil, as every one knows that He is present behind the tabernacle veil, the ciborium veil, (and even the "veil" of the sacred Species). The meaning of the veil is, as always, that of the Lord's presence. If anything may seem disrespectful about a veil, it is probably its skimpy proportions, insipid decoration and general bric-a-brac effect, rather than its own formal meaning. Pure silk curtains of noble design and worthy dimensions, hanging from the architrave of a classical canopy, would probably cause no such misgivings.

A SILVER CHALICE

SIX INCHES HIGH

The chalice shown on the opposite page is both old and new. It was made recently by Mr. Harold Schremmer of Hartford, Connecticut, but its silhouette is a close approximation to that of a famous Polish work of the Middle Ages, "the Poznan chalice".

However, it is not because it stands for a happy combination of ancient and modern that we show it here, but because it seems an unusually perfect solution to the contemporary problem of chalice design. This perfection manifests itself both as goodness and as beauty.

The chalice is good because it satisfies its functional requirements. For example, its stability ratio (height over base width) is 1.33,

Figure 2.

Figure 1.

that recommended by Father E. M. Catich being 1.37. (A Priest Speaks on Chalice Design. *Catholic Art Quarterly,* Volume XIV, No. 2). The volume of the cup also is almost exactly that proposed by Father Catich. The vessel is comfortable to handle with thumb and index finger joined, either with the index above (Figure 1) or below the node. (Figure 2).

And it not only satisfies the claims of function but also those of form. A chalice is essentially a cup—a cup with a special sacred purpose—but a cup none the less. This is a cup noble and generous in its proportions. We have not seen a chalice, old or new, that seems to us more beautiful.

THE CHRISTIAN ARTIST'S TASK

by HIS EMINENCE JAMES CARDINAL LERCARO

MOST REVEREND MONSIGNOR, dear Fathers, beloved Sisters, our sons in Christ:

A luncheon in a dining hall might easily be no more than the satisfaction of a natural need or a more or less conscious awareness of the fifth commandment which forbids our destroying ourselves. But it might also be, as indeed it is here, an encounter with God and a revelation of His love. So the matter was understood by the Christians of earliest times. A fully Christian meal came to be a meeting with the Lord made present to our senses. Where charity and love are, there God is in the spirit of the gospel joining together in fraternal unity those who believe in the gospel. For this reason it was called Agapé, Love. This was an act, and by this act the spirit of the gospel was given, as it should be given, a body that can be seen and touched. I say "it should be given" because the gospel is this: God, who is an invisible and inaccessible spirit, becomes real to our senses in the gospel. In the gospel the benignity of God is shown to us in the humanity of Christ.

For this reason the gospel is a work of art; for this reason every page of the gospel is a poem; every story, every speech, every sentence is a poem. The gospel is the most undeviating statement made by the Holy Spirit. No other statements of the reality of Christ have reached, or even approached, the lofty simplicity of the gospel. The reality of Christ is the making visible to us of the invisible God, and the gospel is the most direct of all statements of this reality. Thus we can say with Saint John: that our eyes have seen and our ears have heard and our hands have touched God in the gospel.

Artists, what is your task? It is what the task of the Christian artist has always been; that is to say, it is to be saturated in the gospel, to feel it deeply, to live it above all else in intensity, in depth, in an impetuous love and generosity so that it may be made known to all men, translated into the languages of all men, first of all in your life and then in your work —in your words if you are artists in words, in your singing if you are artists in song, in your drawing if you are graphic artists. But serve Him, immersed in and penetrated by the Spirit of Christ, who is God made present to man in a visible and tangible manner. Thus, enlivened by His life, bring that life to men through your arts.

In his encyclical, *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina,* our Holy Father of happy memory, Pius XII, said that the singers, the instrumentalists, and the composers of sacred music, are doing real and true apostolic work. In the same way, your work is that of a true apostolate and is a revelation of Christ and a meeting between Christ and men.

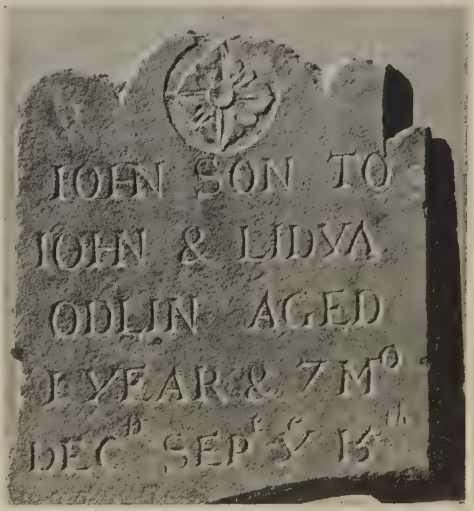
There is a story in the gospel that is especially for you,—the episode of the Transfiguration. Jesus was always God, but there is only one recorded occasion when one of the apostles, the closest to Him, said: "How beautiful it is to be near you,

O Lord. It is good for us to be here. If you wish, we will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elias. We will stay outdoors as long as you remain with us. It is good for us to be here." Jesus had let a small ray of His beauty strike the eyes of Peter, and his heart was lifted with joy. He was oblivious to all earthly things. The other two apostles did not speak, but certainly shared Peter's thought.

It is this beauty of God that you must in some way or other reveal to men, to men who otherwise might entirely miss it, as Peter, John, and James missed it before that night. The experience of that night so impressed them that, years afterward, St. Peter pointed to it as one of the proofs of our faith and our hopes. It is your duty to show this beauty to people that are forgetful, who care for nothing but the utilitarian aspects of life. What is this divine beauty? Why has God impressed traces of Himself on all created things? To reveal Himself to men so that they may say, "How beautiful it is to be with you a little, O Lord!"

Yes, men do not stay long with God. They scorn to meet God, and they forget Him. They must be shown that God is immensely lovable, and made aware above all of the lovableness of His creatures so that it will be obvious that a day spent in the tent of God is worth more than any thousand others. This is the task of the Christian artist. This is the apostolic work to which you are called.

I congratulate you, and I thank you with all my heart for giving me the opportunity of spending a moment with you.



Left, above; A Roman gravestone of the first century A.D. (14" high). Right, above; Fragment of a New England slate gravestone of the eighteenth century, (11" high). A comparison of these stones is of much interest as the later carver can never have seen classical examples, and yet shows many almost identical letter shapes. An illustration of the tendency of a fine and settled tradition. Large photographs of these stones were shown at the exhibition of examples at the convetion in August. Reproduced here by courtesy of The John Stevens Shop, Newport, R.I.

THE ALPHABET IN THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

by DAVID, MONK OF MT. SAVIOUR

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED to me," writes a monk of the 5th or 6th century; "one day when I was in earnest prayer with God in the desert, I took into my hands the Book of Revelations which the blessed John, the Theologian, received on the island of Patmos, and I read until I came to the passage in which Christ said to John, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega', repeating it a second and a third time. From this I gathered that a divine mystery is to be found in the letters of the alphabet, a mystery which has not been unveiled for us. And thus, in all simplicity of heart, I put my trust in Christ. And then I asked His goodness instantly, to enlighten my mind regarding this mystery hidden in the letters of the alphabet."

I have chosen this passage as an introduction to our subject because I think we can not find a better attitude in which to approach it than the humble and prayerful attitude of this unidentified monk, who was a contemporary of St. Benedict, lived probably in Palestine, and wrote a treatise "On the Mysteries of the Greek Letters".

The general theme of this convention is *The Alphabet as a Sacramental.* Long ago we learned from the catechism that what gives to sacramentals their proper character is their connection with the Mystery of Christ through the faith of the Church. In what, then, does the connection between the alphabet and the Mystery of Christ consist? I suggest that we follow three steps in approaching an answer to this question:

First, in considering the alphabet in its metaphysical context we shall see that it is itself a mystery.

Second, we shall outline the aspects of the Mystery of Christ that pertain to our subject.

And, third, we shall try to fit these last two together, and thereby see the alphabet against the background of its deepest meaning.

I. The Mystery of Letters

In calling the alphabet a "mystery" I have given this word a meaning quite different from that intended when we speak of the "Mystery of Christ". Applied to the alphabet, it simply means something that can not be fully explained — a familiar thing which nevertheless makes us marvel as we consider it closely, and inspires awe by the inscrutable remnant of reality behind it, which we sense but can not fully comprehend.

What, then, makes us marvel as we investigate the alphabet more deeply? We are not here approaching the phenomenon on a historical level; although historians, too, find ever new surprises in the alphabet. But our approach will be that of the philosopher, for whom "philosophy begins with wonderment".

On a philosophical level, then, the

Mount Saviour Monastery was founded at Elmira, N.Y. by Dom Damasus Winzen, O.S.B., who is its present prior and a member of the Advisory Board of The Catholic Art Association.

alphabet is closely connected with the marvel of writing and of speaking. In speaking, immaterial ideas are wedded to the physical phenomenon of sound, and there results the spoken word with all the marvels of mutual understanding and exchange. But the spoken word is impermanent. Only when it is associated with some visible sign does it become a permanent "thing", a tangible reality. In the written word a spiritual reality becomes materialized, and therefore "ours".

Add to this the very common notion that the name of a thing or a person not only expresses and stands for but somehow "contains" the reality to which it refers—and writing becomes a means to bind this reality, conjured up by the naming of its name, into a visible, tangible manifestation. The name, and therewith the reality it contains, is "spellbound" in the literal sense. It has been claimed, therefore, with a certain grain of truth, that "all writing was originally magic".

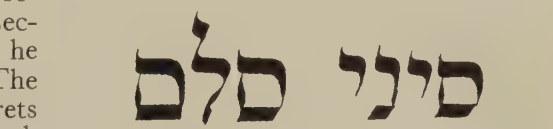
Lest we become confused, let us define here the distinction between magic and religion. The practices of the man of religion and the man of magic are often superficially similar in appearance, but they are diametrically opposed in principle. The religious man strives to learn the secrets of the Creator's will, so that he can adapt his own will to it. The magician strives to learn the secrets of God's creation, so as to make both natural and super-natural powers subservient to his self-will.

What we have said about the marvel of "spellbinding" applies in a general way to ideographic as well as alphabetic writing. But writing by means of letters presents a new marvel to the mind: we need not more than twenty-six letters in our Latin alphabet, for instance, to spell any word we want. The Greek alphabet has only twenty-four letters, the Hebrew only twenty-two. If words contain things, and all words are made up of a limited number of letters, then these few letters must contain all things!

To know the letters is to know the building blocks from which the world is built — the elements of the universe. And indeed the Greek word "STOICHEION" signifies at the same time "letter", "element" and even "Zodiacal sign", for it is conceived as standing for a principle of order on a cosmic scale.

This is due in large degree to the tremendous discovery of Pythagoras that the pitch of a note depends on the length of the sounding string that produces it. For the first time, with this discovery, qualitative differences could be expressed in quantitative terms, and a key for the understanding of the whole universe seemed to have been discovered in numbers. But letters served as the signs in which numbers were written.

And this leads to another marvel regarding the alphabet; as the relations between numbers reveal ever new insights into measurable reality, so do the relations between the let-



40+30+60=130=10+50+10+60

LADDER SINAI

The Hebrew alphabet has numerical as well as phonetic values. If the sum of letters in word A equals that in word B, A and B may be in a sense equated. Here Sinai is correlatd with the Ladder of Jacob's vision. This letter play is called gematria.

ters of words reveal new insight into language and thought, and thereby into spiritual realities. No wonder the Pythagoreans became also the first grammarians. Many times in Plato's dialogues Socrates uses the relations between letters to develop his ideas, and the witty juggling of the letters in the Cratylus is only the play of light on the ripples of the surface, beneath which lies the deepest wonderment at the marvels of the alphabet.

We grasp and represent immaterial ideas by a sort of incarnation in written words; we simplify their immense multiplicity by representing them through a limited number of letters; we order and organize the whole universe by means of our alphabet. What was more natural than that ancient people should have begun to see in the alphabet the key to all knowledge and power?

For each one of us, the study of the alphabet opened the door to learning. To master the elements is somehow to master the whole. A Mohammedan mystic wrote, "All the secrets of God are contained in the heavenly books, these books are contained in the Koran, the Koran in its first *sura*, this *sura* in its first verse, this verse in its first letter, and this letter is contained in the little dot under it."

Beth, the second letter of the Arabic alphabet. The dot has been held to contain within itself all wisdom.

In many customs that have little or nothing to do with magic, the notion that the beginning contains the whole fuses with the tendency to lay hold of immaterial realities by the appropriation of their material representations. On their first day in school, Jewish children in Eastern Europe are given a cooky in the shape of an Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Women in the Swiss Alps dissolve a page of the Bible in their children's first pap. And according to people who have

Antichrist, as the Serpent, represented by his gematric number.

made the letters which are sometimes put into soup a subject of research, even these letters have a long history and some connection with magical practices.

But, to return to the connection of letters with numbers. It was inevitable that one day some scribe should add up the numerical value of the letters of a word — and then compare this sum with the sum obtained by adding up the letters of some other word. You will have no difficulty in imagining that soon people were producing the most fanciful results with this "Gematria", as it was called.

Interest in this matter has been kept alive by the passage from the Apocalypse (13:18) in which St. John gives the number of the Antichrist as 666. From the whole terminology used by St. John in the original Greek, it seems beyond doubt that he was referring to the gematric method of figuring out a person's number from the numerical value of the letters of his name. There are, however, so many possibilities in

these manipulations, that dozens of historical personages have been convincingly identified as the Antichrist of the prophecy.

Whatever else may be hidden in 666, it certainly means, in Biblical language, "multiplied evil" in the sense of man's utmost effort without God. And this may be more important than the application of that number to a specific personage.

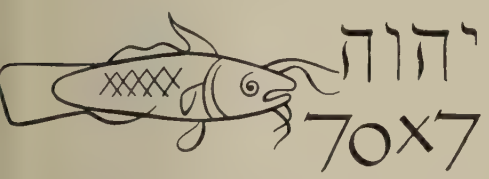
Gematria has also been used to express deep thought and truth, particularly by Jewish sages; they say, for instance, that the word for "ladder" has the same numeric value as the name of Mount Sinai (both 130) and thus they establish a link between Jacob's Ladder, connecting heaven and earth, and the Law given on Sinai.

Apart from gematria, Hebrew literature abounds in speculations about the letters of the alphabet and their relations, and these speculations surpass by far what Greek and Latin literature have produced in that field.

The word for "truth", it is pointed out, begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and ends with the last. The alphabet is thus shown to be the sacred vessel of truth.

Or, the dignity of the term translated "speech" or "word", is indicated by the fact that it is made up of the initials of the words for "fire", "water", and "spirit".

The shapes and names of individual letters are also made the subject of meditation. A work of this sort, ascribed to Rabbi Akiba (A.D. 50-132) is among the most famous, and seems to have influenced directly or indirectly many of the Catholic Fathers.



Christ, as the Fish, represented by the number of forgiveness.

It may be interesting, in this connection, to notice that the monogram of Christ, the Chi Rho (much used nowadays, though not always with discrimination) may have been chosen originally not only on account of its literal significance but also for the symbolic shapes of the two letters. According to the "Mysteries of the Greek Letters" which I have already quoted, the upper part of the Rho (which in the manuscript is a *circle*) represents heaven, while the vertical line, "traced in fire red", the author says, "marks the descent of God, the Logos, from heaven, like a ray of light to illumine the world." And the Chi, he explains, points towards the four corners of the world where the word of the Gospel is to be carried.

An early form of the monogram Chi Rho, which is also a divine diagram. The Word descends from the Father and is sent to the four points of the compass.

The conviction that the letters of the alphabet in some way hold the secret of all knowledge has led to attempts at grasping knowledge that may seem to us childish. But where deep thinkers look with reverence into the mysterious relations between

St. Joseph's Commercial

letters, and remain sober enough not to get caught in a maze of unrealistic systematizations, they do discover ever new marvels. So we read in the Talmud:

"The Holy One, blessed be He, took the two letters of the word for fire, added the two letters of His holy Name, the 'yod' to form man, the 'he' to form woman, and he said: 'If together they follow my way, my name shall abide between them, and if not, my name shall be removed from between them, and there shall remain but a consuming fire of passion.' "

And in the Mishnah we read; "Scripture says, 'And the tablets were the work of God, and the writ-

NAME OF GOD FIRE

אש יה

אישה=ת+איש=י+אש

FIRE MAN WOMAN

An elaborate example of word play. The Hebrew for "man" and for "woman" contain the two letters that spell the Name of God. So sanctified man and woman join in holy matrimony. Removal of the divine letters from these two words leaves nothing but the "fire" of passion.

ing the writing of God graven on the tablets'. (Exod. 32:16) Read not charuth (graven) but read cheruth (freedom)." Only the Law of God, that is to say, makes the obedient man truly free.

If the alphabet is a key to knowledge, it is also a key to power.

"With pen of scribe the great man shall attain
Ends that the warrior's sword can never gain."

Folklore calls the letters of the alphabet "Twenty-six kings, ruling the universe". As a tool for communication connecting continents and bridging centuries, the alphabet can become a powerful instrument for man's dominion over the world. But there is also a magic approach to the power "contained", as it were, in the letters of the alphabet. Word-magic is not only a phenomenon significant for the human mind, but it also sheds light on the alphabet as such.

The basis of word-magic is the notion that the written word is charged with power. As the magic word is pronounced, the reality which it contains appears fleetingly as a flash of lightning. But when the word or name is written down, one *possesses* a tangible manifestation of its content. One can seize it, play with it, reverse it, distort and mutilate it, destroy it. One can even swallow the letters, as we have seen, in an effort at appropriation.

It is terrifying to find all this seriously developed in the flood of magic literature that has come down to us. Words are written backwards to annihilate their meaning, and therefore the most powerful spell will be a palindromic word which will be unchanged when reversed. Or the letters of a word are dropped off one by one, either to destroy it or to squeeze out, as it were, every drop of power contained in each letter. Words are built up as well as broken down, the magician attempting, by the systematic composition of letters and syllables, to find a word or name strong enough to spell-bind the most powerful spirit.

But there remains an inkling that all these manipulations are in vain, an indelible awareness of the primacy of the spoken word over the merely written one. Everywhere in magical

practices we find that the desired effect is expected only from a chanting, a pronouncing, at least a mumbling, of the written word or syllable. Man knows that the word cannot be bound, even where he makes a desperate attempt to set up the letters of the alphabet as a sort of magical trap.

On the other hand, we find again and again a truly religious reverence for the written word and for the letters of the alphabet. A simple peasant in a biography from the time of the Thirty Years War says, "When I get up in the morning I first recite the whole alphabet. For in it all prayers are contained and our Lord himself may put the letters together and read prayers out of them."

There is a religious awe contained in this simple statement which reminds us of St. Francis of Assisi, who is said to have picked up reverently every scrap of writing for fear that sacred names or words contained in it should be dishonored. Maybe in this reverence for writing and letters lies a deep insight, a notion that the mystery of the alphabet we have considered so far, points beyond itself to a Mystery on a higher level.

To the Christian, the fact that a human word can be embodied in the letters of the alphabet as the vessels of wisdom and power, points towards the Mystery of Him whose name is "Wisdom" and "Power of God", the Mystery of the invisible Word of God incarnate in the visible nature of man.

This is why the author of the book on the Mysteries of the Greek Letters can say that "in the very act of writing every hand willy-nilly confesses Christ. For every single letter points out that Christ is two in One, God and man both at the same time."

Writing considered in this wide context is not basically magic but foreshadows from its very origin the highest Mystery of true religion.

II The Mystery of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God

At this point it becomes necessary to reconsider the term "mystery". We were aware, of course, of using it somewhat loosely when applying it to the alphabet. So far, we were moving on a merely natural level. Now we rise to the level of divine revelation. On this level, we mean

Cross-words were not originally mere pastimes. An English example reproduced by courtesy of the Benedictine sisters of Regina Laudis, Bethlehem, Connecticut.

by "Mysterium" the revealing in history of God's eternal plan of salvation, hidden hitherto, but now made manifest in the person of Christ, the Messias, to all those who believe. In the last analysis, that very person of Jesus Christ is the Mysterium we mean.

St. John Chrysostom writes, "And though it be everywhere preached, still it remains a Mystery;—for that is a Mystery, which everywhere is preached, and yet is not known by those who have not a right mind; and is revealed not by wisdom, but by the Holy Spirit, so far as it is possible

for us to receive it." And for this he uses a very significant metaphor. "Just as children," he says, "looking on their books, know not the meaning of letters, neither know what they see; yea more, if even a grown man be unskilled in letters the same thing will befall him; but the skilful will find much meaning stored up in the letters . . . . Unbelievers, albeit they hear, seem not to hear, but the faithful having the skill which is by the Spirit, behold the meaning of the things stored therein. For instance, it is this very thing that Paul signified, when he said that even now the word preached is hidden; for unto them that perish, he saith, it is hidden." (2 Cor. 4:3).

Now the "word" that is proclaimed is not some esoteric doctrine; it is the Word, the Word-made-flesh. Thus we find St. John Chrysostom applying the symbol of the alphabet to the Mystery of Christ, which is realized in the person of Jesus, the incarnate Logos.

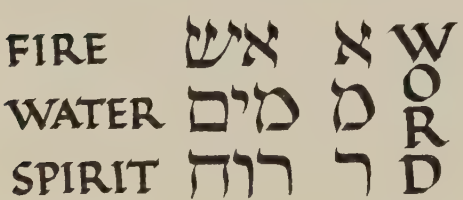
For the same reason, St. John mentions in the opening sentence of his first Epistle the "Word of life which was from the beginning, and which we have heard," and then exclaims with deep emotion, "We have seen it with our eyes"—the word, which normally we can only hear with our ears;—"we have looked upon it"—yes, even more than that, (and one can sense the amazement in St. John's voice) "Our hands have handled it!" This awe and wonderment of the Apostle who gazes in faith upon the man Jesus and begins to read the Mystery of the Logos, corresponds—though on an infinitely higher level—to the narvel we encountered in the fact that one can read human ideas by looking at the letters of the alphabet in which they are embodied, that we can even "handle" them in their written form. The unbelievers, the "illiterate" in St. John Chrysotom's symbolic terms, look at the same reality "and see only paper and ink"; see but the human nature of Christ.

Not only the Logos of St. John's first Epistle, but also the Logos of his Gospel, is Jesus as the "written Word of God", for the Prologue culminates in the solemn announcement of the incarnation; "And the Logos was made flesh . . . . and we saw his glory."

Faith teaches us to "read" the Mystery; more than that, faith "inscribes" in our hearts the Mystery which St. Paul defines as "Christ within you". But not static. "Christ within you,—*your hope of glory.*" (Col. 1:27) Coming from God, and leading to God, the Mystery is something eminently dynamic. It brings about that transformation "from glory to glory" of which St. Paul speaks in 2 Cor. Chapter 3.

That whole chapter reads like a paraphrase on the pun which we mentioned before; the new Law is not charuth (engraved) but it is cheruth (freedom).

First St. Paul calls the Corinthian Church a "letter of Christ, ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God". Then he compares this writing of the Spirit on the tablets of the human heart with the writing engraved on the tablets of



A Hebrew cross-word. Fire, Water, and Spirit are synonyms for the "Word". Here the three initials spell "Word".

stone on Mt. Sinai. That St. Paul passes on to the splendor on the face of Moses makes it likely that he was familiar with the tradition according to which it was the glory reflected from the letters on the tablets that causes Moses' countenance to shine.

There is a charming story that Moses wiped the pen of God on the hair of his forehead, and that the heavenly ink caused his face thus to radiate light. How much more should the seal of the Spirit on the foreheads of Christans cause their faces to shine, a mark by which the heathen claimed to recognize them. This resplendence of countenance was ascribed to Adam before the fall, and expected again for all men in the Messianic time.

If writing which accused us had such splendor, argues St. Paul, how much more so the writing that justifies us—the writing of the Spirit. "And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

An early Ethiopic text catches this truth in a beautiful poetic image: "The Covenant, that is to say, the Ten Words, had been written by the Fingers of God. Now the cutting of the letters were like unto the footprints of a man . . . ." We know this man, the Son of Man, Who said, 'He that follows me . . . . shall have the light of life.' (John, 8:12) And the Apostles who followed His footprints up the mountain of the transfiguration caught there a glimpse of that glory into which we are to be transformed, "the glory of God in the features of Christ Jesus." (2 Cor. 4:6)

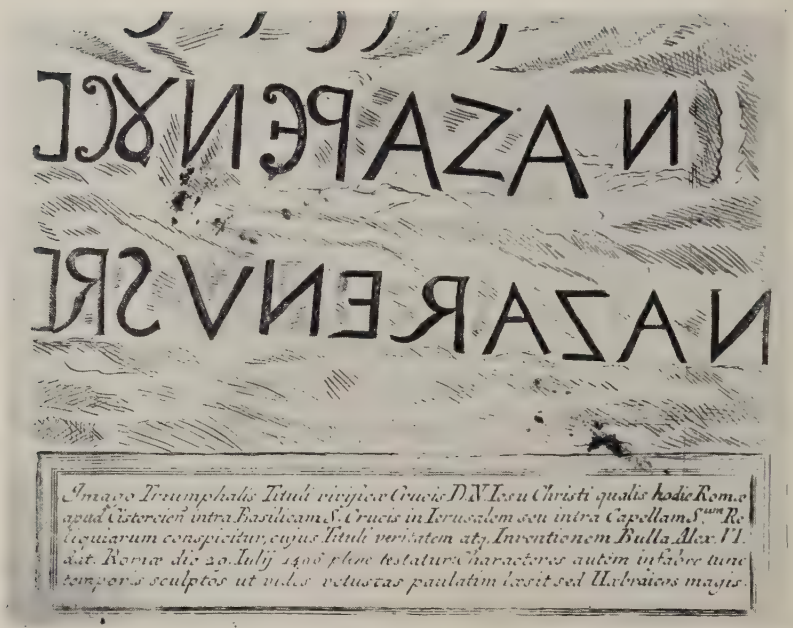
He said, "I am the Way" and "way" in this transferred sense, as a "guiding principle", is as satisfactory and accurate a term as "law" to translate the Hebrew word "Torah". To those who followed Him to Mt. Tabor He revealed Himself in a special manner as the New Torah:

Talmudic tradition considers the "Hear, O Israel", i.e. the words which all Israel is commanded to "engrave" in its heart (Deut. 6:4f), as containing the entire Law; and according to St. Mark (Mk. 12:29) Jesus begins His summary of the Law with this same quotation from Deuteronomy: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God." And then He quotes the double commandment upon which the whole Torah depends. Now on Mount Tabor, with Moses and Elias, the two great guardians of the Torah for witnesses, the voice from heaven points out the New Torah, Christ in his splendor, substituting for the "Hear, O Israel", the solemn "Hear Ye Him" (Mat. 17:5).

אמת

The Hebrew for Truth begins with Aleph, the first letter of the alphabet, and end with Tau, the last letter. It therefore suggests the scope of all the truth that the alphabet is able to express.

And what do they hear? They hear Him talk with Moses and Elias about His "Exodus" (Lk. 9:13). The Mystery of Christ would not be complete without this Exodus, without the cross. And again it is most fitting that it should be Moses who speaks to the Lord about this final accomplishment of the Mystery; Moses, whose Exodus from Egypt had foreshadowed the Lord's Exodus. Leading the Israelites from the Red Sea, Moses became a figure of Christ leading the Church through death to life. Should not his shattering the first tablets on account of the people's sin, and his receiving new ones, also foreshadow what was to come?


NAZARENVS IRI
Imago Triumphalis Tituli vivifice Crucis D.N.Iesu Christi qualis hodie Rome
apud Cistercien intra Basilicam S. Crucis in Ierusalem seu intra Capellam S.ti Re
liquiarum conspicitur, cujus Tituli veritatem atq; Inventionem Bulla Alex. VI.
dat. Rome die 20. Julij 1496 plene testatur. Characteres autem in tabe tunc
temporis sculptos ut vides vetustas paulatim exesit sed Hebraicos magis

A relic preserved at Rome in the Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. This ancient bit of wood is believed by many modern scholars to be part of the actual title used at the Crucifixion of Our Lord.

atonement was to be offered to all who put their trust in Him . . . Or in St. Paul's words: "He himself is our peace; he it is who made both Jews and Gentiles one, and has broken down the partition wall of hostility which separated them. The Law with its commandments and decrees he abolished through his human nature, so that of the two races he might create in himself one new being, making peace and reconciling both by the cross in one body to God . . . By one and the same spirit through him both of us have found entrance to the Father." (Eph. 2:14ff)

St. Paul also proclaims the New Law of atonement more powerfully than any one else could: "He forgave

The Rabbis, comparing the content of the first tablets with that of the second, found that the latter contained all the letters of the alphabet, while the former was lacking one single letter, Teth, the initial of the word for "good". Only the final version of the Torah was to be called good in every respect.

Two functions of the old Law were to come to an end in Christ. The old Torah had been set up by God as a wall between his chosen people and the Gentiles. Now, this wall was to be broken, Jews and Gentiles alike should walk in Christ, the Way.

And secondly, the old Torah being a constant accusation against transgression, was yet powerless to atone for sin. In Christ, the new Torah, all your sins, and cancelled the bond with its decrees that was against us. He did away with it when he nailed it to the cross." (Col. 2:14)

And what was nailed to the cross? Christ, the "written Word of the Father", as we have called Him in His

incarnation, and an inscription giving His name and title—name and title standing for all a person is—written in three different alphabets. Could any one invent a more pregnant symbol for the universality of the Mystery that takes place here?

In the death of Christ on the cross, the first tablets were shattered. In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which was the fruit of His passion, the new Torah was written on the tablets of the Church. "When Moses descended from Sinai," says Jewish tradition, "and saw Israel's offence, he noticed that the inscription had vanished from the Tablets. Dumbfounded, he broke the Tablets, and then and there it was decreed that Israel be taught through trouble and subjection, through exile and anguish, through oppression and indigence." Christ took these sufferings upon Himself. In His cross, the Mystery was completed. The "consummatum est" of the dying is echoed by the triumphant Christ in the Apocalypse: "It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."

III The Alphabet as a Symbol for Christ

Once we have realized that the Word of God shining forth in the person of Christ Jesus does not contradict, but rather contains and brings to complete fulfilment the word of God that shone on the tablets of the first Covenant, "adorned by God," as the Midrash says, "with the twenty-two letters of the alphabet," we realize also that this alphabet is given an entirely new symbolic significance. Now the meditations of the Rabbis on the alphabet begin to glow in the light of Christ, like church windows when the sun rises.

Moreover, through St. John's choice of the term *Logos* for the new Torah, the whole wealth of alphabet symbolism accumulated by Greek speculations about the Logos fuses with Hebrew tradition and flows into the Christian concept of letters as symbolic of the Word-made-flesh.

All that has ever been said or written, the name of everything in creation, can be traced back to the letters of the alphabet uniting in ever new combinations. What could have been more natural than to see in this alphabet a manifestation of that unifying principle from which all proceeds and to which all returns; the Logos whom Philo calls "the bond holding the universe together," St. Justin's "Logos spermaticos"—the word-seed scattered in creation, and now gathered home in the harvest of salvation?

The scattering of this seed corresponds to the breaking up of a word in spelling it and writing it down, while in reading it we re-assemble it into a whole. "It has pleased God . . . to re-capitulate all things in Christ," (Eph. 1:9f) in whom they were created. And one is reminded of the lavishly decorated capital letters in the Book of Kells. Are they not a fitting symbol for Christ, who became the capital letter for the final word of God, spelled out by the Church in history, and read by the Lamb who alone is worthy to open the seals of the apocalyptic scroll.

The Lamb is He who bears a name which He alone knows, a name which, nevertheless, is plainly spelled out on His blood-sprinkled, seamless robe—the Church. Those who are one with Christ can read the Mystery, while unbelievers see but can not read it. And His name is, "The Word of God". (Apoc. 19:11-16)

In the Ethiopic Book of the Praises of Mary we read: "He was the Living Word of the Father who came down on Mt. Sinai, and gave the Law to

Moses whilst the top of the Mountain was covered with mist, and with smoke, and with darkness, and with storm, and with terrifying trumpet blasts. He instructed those who stood there fearfully. So then it was He who came down on thee, O rational Mountain, in the humility of the Lover of man. Without any change He became incarnate in thee . . ."

Another text of the Eastern Church acclaims the Blessed Virgin thus: "Salutation unto thee, O Book of the Law and the Covenant like unto the tables of stone . . . "

What we can say of Mary in whom Christ was hidden until He shone forth in His first coming, can also be said of the Church in whom Christ is hidden until His second coming.

The Church is the Temple of the Word, not like the Temple of old which only sheltered the Word of God written on the tablets; but as the third Temple, the Temple of the Messianic time, the whole of which is the visible and tangible Body of the incarnate Logos, the alphabet in which the Word of God is written. According to the Milanese rite, the walls of a church building, the architectural symbol for this reality, are covered with the alphabet at their consecration.

And in our own rite of consecrating a church, the alphabet plays a conspicuous role; ashes are spread on the floor in the form of a cross stretching to the very corners of the building. In the course of the ceremony the Bishop traces with his staff the letters of the Greek alphabet on one cross beam, and the Latin alphabet on the other. It is not necessary for us to tie ourselves down to a single interpretation of this symbolic action. The greatness of the symbol lies precisely in this, that it can not be exhausted by one interpretation, but that it reflects many aspects of a higher reality, as one diamond reflects the light of the sun in its many facets.

In the alphabet-rite at the consecration of a church, all the lines which we have been tracing in the foregoing study meet:

There is first the basic symbolism of the alphabet. All truths, all prayers, are contained in the letters as their elements. He who has all knowledge, He who has the power to grant all prayers, takes possession of this building.

But in Him is also the Mystery which only faith can read, above all the mystery of the cross (the use of crosswords in Christian symbolism would provide ample material for a separate study) and these letters are written on a cross of ashes standing for human nature taken from dust, and returning to it. In His incarnation the Logos was "written", as we have said, into human nature, engraved by the Holy Spirit as the New Torah. An allusion to Eph. 2:16 so strongly suggests this, in spite of the fact that the two alphabets are not Greek and Hebrew, but Greek and Latin, that medieval interpreters have seen in their crossing a symbol for the joining of Jews and Gentiles into one body in the crucified Christ.

The cross on the pavement, besides being the initial *chi* of Christ's messianic title, turns the floor of the church into a compass-card, marking this house of God as the center of the world. "The construction of the earth was begun at the center, with the foundation stone of the Temple," the Midrash tells us. "And on it the Ineffable Name of God is graven, the knowledge of which makes a man master over nature and over life and death."

This man is the new Adam, who is himself the Foundation Stone. The name of Adam consists of the initials for East (ANATOLE), West (DUSIS), North (ARKTOS), and South (MESEMBRIA), in the Greek language. Truly, the Church as His Mystical Body may be called "The Cosmos of Grace".

But the Word finds its full realization only when it is spoken, and even more so when it is being sung. In the Alphabet of Rabbi Akiba, God says: "Even Israel for whose sake the whole world has been made, I have created only for the sake of the Song." And Nathan Herz wrote, "The whole world is nothing more than a singing and a dancing before the Holy One, blessed be He. Every Jew is a singer before Him, and every letter in the Torah is a musical note."

How wonderfully this is fulfilled when the walls of the newly consecrated church resound with the divine Liturgy of the New Israel, in which He Who is the New Torah is Himself our Psalm! And "the Psalm" in the language of the Church is the 118th with its twenty-two stanzas, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and each stanza made up of eight verses, every one of which begins with the letter which that stanza celebrates. Truly the tongue of the Church is "the stylus of a scribe writing with speed". (Ps. 44:2) Here is the Word returning to the Father but returning not empty. God has blessed every creature in Christ the Word, and in Christ the Word every creature blesses God.

Bezalel, the Biblical prototype of all artisans, whom God nominated

Hebrew, Greek, and Roman alphabets carved in the crypt floor of a contemporary church—Christ Sun of Justice, Benson, Vermont. The Greek and Roman alphabets are cut there in anticipation of the alphabetic dedication rite.

on Sinai to make the sacred instruments of worship, is said to have known "the combination of letters by which the world was created". What a deep poetic image for the creative intellect, that "intus legere", that gazing at Him Who is the Alpha and the Omega, all that lies between them!

We have considered the alphabet as a mystery on the natural level. We have given thought to the divine Mystery of the Logos, written down in creation, written down on Sinai, written down in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. We started out by contemplating the alphabet on the background of the Mystery of Christ, and now we find that the alphabet as a symbol expresses that Mystery. How pregnant a symbol it can be in the hands of the Church!

In our own time, it could become as fruitful a symbol as it has been in the past. But let us not feel obliged to use the Greek or Hebrew letters, not even in the form of the Chi Rho or the Alpha and Omega. These forms have in our time a certain mysterious flavor which has nothing to do with the true Mystery. The true symbols for the Christian Mystery are humble and simple and on the surface, plain for all. Let us use our own alphabet, or at least its first three letters, the common, unpretentious ABC, as a symbol of Christ.

And for any one who might think this too feeble a vessel for so great a Mystery, let me conclude with a story about Rabbi Akiba, the sage who is said to have been able to hang mountains of interpretation on every little serif of a letter. He and three other Rabbis, it is told, entered Paradise, and came close to the tremendous Presence. When they returned, one of them, overwhelmed by the vision, lay down and died. For the second, the encounter with Him who transcends all measure wiped out of his mind all understanding of relations and of degree between things, and he was struck with madness. To the third, the world and his own self had lost all dignity in comparison with the absolute holiness of God, and in despair he abandoned himself to sin. Only Rabbi Akiba entered in peace and departed in peace, saying, "Truly we are nothing before Him. But it is He Who gave us this nature." And the Rabbi went forth to teach the highest truths of God in the humble symbols of man.

THE ALPHABET CONVENTION

I.

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION of the Catholic Art Association was held on August sixteenth to eighteenth at St. Elizabeth's College, Convent Station, New Jersey. The theme chosen for this meeting was "The Alphabet as Sacramental". A report on the convention must be primarily a statement of how this theme was presented.

No one doubts that our alphabet is a practical device of the greatest importance for the recording of words and ideas, but for most of us its value goes no further than the utilitarian. To help our members realize the uses of the alphabet which are beyond the utilitarian we chose our theme and framed the convention activities to express these values. We notice briefly here those which have this specific purpose.

There was a lecture on the historical development of various important hands, by the calligrapher Mr. Arnold Bank, of New York City. With the aid of large, rapidly written examples and diagrams, Mr. Bank made clear the relationship of the hands and types with which we are familiar today to their ancestors of the Greek and Roman past. "History is valuable" said Hilaire Belloc, "because it tells us who we are." Mr. Bank, as historian, told us who our letters are.

Then there was Mr. Graham Carey's slide lecture on the philosophy of the alphabet. Philosophy is the study of things from the point of view of their deepest causes, and Mr. Carey tried to suggest the outline of a philosophy of the alphabet, by showing letters as the effects of their causes—good, true, and beautiful letters as the results of right causes, and bad, false, and ugly letters as the results of wrong ones. He drew his examples from the special arts of writing, of carving letters in stone, and of printing with movable types on paper.

Brother David, a Benedictine monk from Mount Saviour, Elmira, N.Y., spoke on alphabetic theology. Nothing can be stated about God except analogically, and in this lecture we were introduced to some of the theological analogies that wise men of our Jewish and Christian traditions have seen in the alphabet. The analogies are between the natural mysteries of letters and the super-natural Mysteries of religion. Saints and sages of long past times delighted to express the latter in terms of the former, but the truths which they proclaimed, though largely forgotten, are as available today as formerly. Brother David's discourse, in a shortened version, is printed elsewhere in this issue. In many ways it formed a pivotal point in the convention.

There were many other lectures given and papers read, but these three, which established respectively historic, aesthetic, and analogical values in the alphabet, seem in retrospect to have been the most important with regard to the theme.

There was also a small but carefully selected exhibition of works of alphabetic art by five pioneers of the last one hundred years, and one school of the eighteenth century. The five

masters were William Morris, Edward Johnston, Rudolf Koch, Eric Gill, and John Howard Benson. The school was that of the early New England stone carvers. This exhibition was intended to exemplify visually the nature of a true artistic tradition, and in particular to show the sources of influence and inspiration which made Mr. Benson's achievement possible. Rarely seen examples of the work of all these precursors were shown, the New England letter cutters being represented by large photographs.

Mr. Benson's central position in this show was explained on the third day of the meeting, when The Catholic Art Association award was presented to him in the person of his widow. The award was accompanied by a citation which had been written out by Mr. Tom Gourdie, the Scottish calligrapher, and which read as follows:—

THE CATHOLIC ART ASSOCIATION

holds to the classical view that a work of art is anything that is made well. It encourages a truer understanding of this view and a better practice of arts of all kinds.

JOHN HOWARD BENSON

devoted his life to the study of letters and to the restoration to common use of their best forms. He saw letters as things to be read and, therefore, necessarily legible; as things to be imagined and made and, therefore, necessarily works of art. He saw them historically, subject to the laws of time as well as of space.

He was a master of lettering in many techniques but his greatest achievement was the restoration of carved lettering in stone to its proper dignity among the arts.

Not only was his work without rival during the thirty years of his working life, but he succeeded in establishing a glyptic tradition which has survived his death.

The Officers and Members of The Catholic Art Association ask his widow

ESTHER FISHER BENSON

to accept this medal on his behalf, as a token of the very real esteem and gratitude in which they hold her husband's memory. AT SAINT ELIZABETH'S COLLEGE, NEW JERSEY, ON THE FEAST OF SAINT HELEN, AUGUST EIGHTEENTH, ANNO DOMINI 1959

For the Association
Thomas Phelan, President

The presentation of our medal was followed by a short film showing our medallist in action. This was an educational film made by the late Robert Flaherty and others, and showed in detail Mr. Benson cutting a quill pen and then writing with it. In former times mastery of an art usually included skill in making as well as using the tools of that art, and even today mastery sometimes makes necessary such special abilities.

The conveners were also shown various alphabetic arts in practice. Crimilda Pontes demonstrated fine pen writing, James Casey brush writing on stone, and Roxanne Carey the carving of letters in stone. Each of these three was formerly a pupil, and

later an associate of Mr. Benson's, and their skillful handling of their tools indicated that the graphic and glyptic traditions which Mr. Benson spent his life in strengthening are still alive and active in the world.

II.

The business affairs of the Association were taken care of by two principal meetings — the officers' meeting on August 16th, and the membership meeting on the following day — and by the deliberations of various committees. Both the officers' and the membership meetings followed rather closely the agenda outlined in the President's report, printed elsewhere in this issue. It was agreed:

That the publication of *The Catholic Art Teacher* be postponed, and the work of the Education Committee be carried on for the present in other ways.

That the duties of the Executive Director be taken over by the President, and the handling of the local units be referred to the Executive Secretary.

That a postal vote of the membership be taken on the question of changing the name of our official publication from *The Catholic Art Quarterly to Good Work*. (The final official vote on this change was strongly in favor of the new title.)

That a campaign for increased subscriptions and membership be undertaken by Mr. Edward Little among public libraries and schools.

As a result of the committee meetings it was decided to hold our 1960 convention at St. Vincent's Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, in August, just before the Liturgical Week which will be held in nearby Pittsburgh. The theme and the medallist for the 1960 convention were chosen.

III.

The Convention proper began with a dialogue Mass offered by Father Phelan. His homily stressed the purpose of the Association. We are creatures who not only have each a special being but each a special activity, and these aspects are so closely related as to be interdependent. It is for this reason that what we have to do must be well done — that we must be artists. This is true, whatever may be the destiny of the human race, annihilation or escape from annihilation. What work we are given to do, we must do well.

On the following day, the Pontifical Mass was celebrated by the Right Reverend Charles Coriston, O.S.B., Abbot of St. Paul's, Newton, N.J. In his homily, Father Abbot also spoke on a theme familiar to our members, pointing out the necessity of high standards among architects, craftsmen, and farmers, and saying that all these are artists if they achieve these standards.

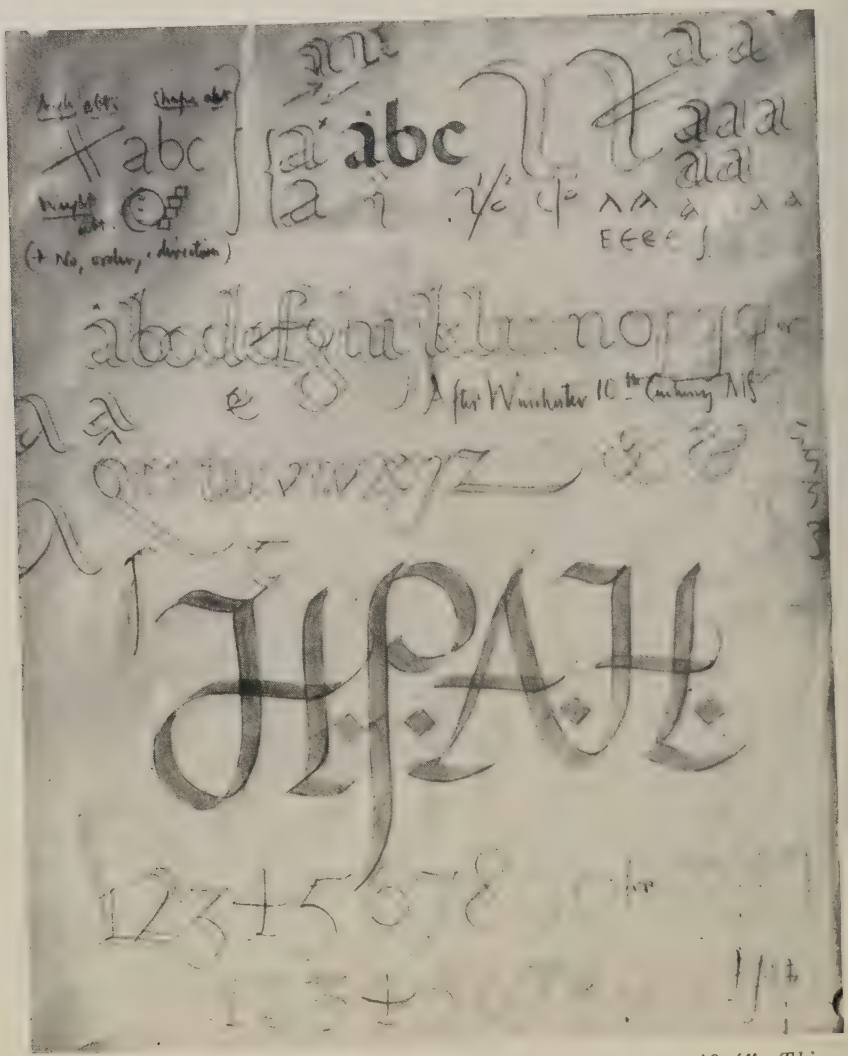
At noon on the second day we had a visit from His Eminence Giacomo Cardinal Lercaro, Archbishop of Bologna, who looked at our exhibition, had lunch, and addressed us afterwards. His words are recorded on another page of this issue. The visit of such a man was a great honor, a strong reminder of the presence of the Good Shepherd in His Church, and a heartening encouragement to us in our chosen work.

At the end of each day the conveners met to sing Compline together.

On the morning following the closing of the Convention proper, many of the members availed themselves of the invitation of the Dominican Sisters of the Perpetual Rosary at Union City, N.J., and journeyed by bus to see an exhibition of the paintings and other work of Sister Mary

of the Compassion, O.P., who is one of our early members. They not only enjoyed Sister Mary's pictorial artistry but her culinary artistry as well, as she provided a lunch for all her guests, prepared by her own hands.

The very heartfelt thanks of the Association go to Sister Grace Mary and her co-workers at St. Elizabeth's College for the gracious hospitality which made our convention not only possible, but a pleasure, and a stimulation to our work.



A page of double-pencil writing by Edward Johnston. 13" x 10½". This was one of the exhibits at the convention Lettering Exhibition in August. It was written in 1935 for Philip Hagreen, whose initials it bears and by whose permission it is here reproduced. Mr. Hagreen says of it: "On a folded sheet of cartridge paper — Alphabet and initials written with joined pencils. This was done while E.J. talked about that kind of script."

TEN YEARS AGO
THINGS AND THEIR MAKING

by PHILIP HAGREEN

ST. AUGUSTINE SPOKE OF beauty as *splendor ordinis,* which is perhaps as near to a definition as we can have. St. Thomas spoke of beauty as *id quod visum placet,* and this is commonly quoted as St. Thomas's definition of it. Actually, it is a statement of how beauty is enjoyed—not by being used or consumed or possessed, but simply by being perceived. Those who try to use the phrase as a definition have to assume that the beholder of a work of art has a right understanding of the requirements and conditions of the work and of the character of the workman, and also an appetite that desires and enjoys only that which is most suitable. Human nature being as it is, the things which have been called beautiful include the voluptuous and the cadaverous, the brutal and the sentimental, the grandiose and the trivial. A glance around any Catholic church will show the curse which falls on those who seek what pleases them, or what they think will please others, instead of seeking rightness in making.

The simple truth about beauty is that it is an attribute of God. It is a sign of God's handiwork. Beauty can not come from anywhere but God. God has seen that His creation is very good, and we can see that it is very beautiful. Wherever God's purpose is fulfilled, beauty is shown, whether we can see it or not.

God's creatures, sustained by His will and obedient to His laws, act on one another. The wind sets the waves in rhythm and the waves churn pebbles to roundness and spread sand to smoothness. All is changing continually, but the change is from beauty to beauty. The spider's web and the bird's nest cannot fail in beauty; these creatures work according to God's will.

Man is created with ability to make, with the instincts of a maker and with the need and duty of spending most of his life in making. It may be doubted whether any human activity is without an element of making. A cow eats, but a man orders his eating so that he makes a meal. A beast may travel, but a man may so order his traveling that he makes a journey. We naturally use the word when we speak of man's higher acts. The word *poet* means maker, and we think of poetry as a product of man's higher faculties. Above all, man makes his prayer. He makes his acts of faith, etc., as he makes his Confession and makes his Communion.

But man has free will and is apt to sin. If he makes according to God's will, what he makes has beauty; it takes its place in God's universe.

This is the simple truth about art, for art is the right way of making such things as it is right to make. When man makes rightly, he is acting as God's agent and the thing made shows by its beauty that God willed it. To be rightly made, a thing must be appropriate to its purpose; it must be made of suitable material, and the material must be fashioned in ways suitable to its nature. Suitable

tools and processes must be used, and all must be done in a manner suitable to the maker. This last rightness means that the work involved must be appropriate work for man—a creature fallen and redeemed, a sinner, but a candidate for eternal union with God. It also means that it must be appropriate to the particular man, whether he be a genius or a dullard.

No two works of art are exactly similar, for no two human beings are alike and none of them is quite as he was yesterday. The perfection of each work of art is peculiar to itself. This is true of God's art, for every one of His blades of grass is specially fitted for its function.

To put this simple truth in another way: Man must make things. It is his duty to God and to his neighbor that he should make them rightly. Right making is God's work done by man, so it has something of God's beauty. Creative work is intended to develop the maker. It exercises his will and his judgment, it refines his senses, and it gives full play and discipline to his imagination. The maker is concerned to perfect the thing he is making, and the most important effect of that is to perfect the maker.

At the present time this simple truth is generally denied, or its application is despaired of. Making is everywhere displaced by mechanical production, and what is called art is governed by aesthetics—that is, by pleasure-seeking. Men are almost all employed in sub-human work. Their creative faculties are undeveloped and their senses and imaginations undisciplined through lack of right use.

That sins of greed and injustice should gradually have produced this system and smirched the whole world with its ugliness is not to be wondered at. What is surprising is that such hideous violation of the rights of God and man should have been achieved without resistance, or even protest, from churchmen.

This failure has, no doubt, many reasons and many excuses. I am going to suggest one reason which may have hampered churchmen in the past and which makes them helpless in the face of industrialism today.

Learned men are constantly reminding us of our debt to ancient Greece. Undoubtedly we have *received* a great deal from that source. What we *owe* for it depends on its worth. Now, however great the philosophy and the art of Greece, they are vitiated by slavery. This philosophy and this art have percolated through Christian philosophy and Christan art, and after two thousand years of that cleansing they still bring with them the poison of slavery. Even those who see slavery as an evil that should be abolished think that there are liberal arts and servile arts, or fine arts and mere crafts.

Along with this false distinction we have inherited another which is even more harmful. This is a wrong idea of the distinction between doing and making. The distinction may be truly defined, but is it a distinction that has any bearing on a man's conduct? Has man any less responsibility to God and his neighbor as a maker than as a doer?

We are told that doing is governed by prudence, and that making is governed by art. We know that Prudence is the Queen of the moral virtues; but a list of the moral virtues does not include art. No one suggests that the artist is at any time outside the realm of Prudence, but there is a strong suggestion that his art is.

Now this is absurd. Art—right

making—is the making of what God wants us to make in the way He wishes us to make it. If it were not this, it woud be sin.

Patience, fortitude, modesty, obedience, etc.—these are the rules of art as they are of conduct.

Impatience, slackness, self-assertion, disobedience, etc.—these are the faults of art as they are of manners.

Making is God's province now, as it was in the beginning and as it was in Nazareth. This province has been invaded and God's rule usurped. If we can do little in the way of rebellion, at least we need not aquiesce. We can still pray for God's kingdom to come and not that the enemy's rule may be blessed.

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THE YEAR JUST PASSED has tested the provisions of the by-laws of our new Constitution. The new by-laws were an attempt to simplify our organization. They have proved successful in that the organization has functioned as efficiently as human limitations permit. But the experience of the year forces on us the necessity of considering some cutting down of our activities, and the need for expanding our influence by some promotional device.

The executive directorship has not proved effective, and Mr. Feild has found it necessary to resign both that office and the chairmanship of the Local and Diocesan Committee.

The Executive Secretary reports a total pledged membership of 276 and total subscriptions to *The Catholic Art Quarterly* of 845. The latter figure indicates a decline of 71 subscriptions from the previous year.

Cash on hand as of June 30, 1959 was $2,349.05.

The Nomination and Medal Committee has chosen a recipient for the 1959 awarding of The Catholic Art Association Medal. The medal will be awarded at the National Convention. It has also drawn up a list of potential officers.

Two books, *Current Concepts of Art,* by Sister M. Jeanne, O.S.F., and *Making and Thinking,* by Walter Shewring, as well as the regular four issues of *The Catholic Art Quarterly,* have been published by the Publications Committee. The Committee has devoted a good deal of time to a study of the possibilities of a general reorganization of *The Catholic Art Quarterly*. It has concluded that it seems advisable that the official organ of the Association should be published with a new and shorter name, an improved format, a higher quality of literary and pictorial material, and a more effective system of distribution.

Following an illness, the editor of *The Catholic Art Teacher* was forced to resign that post, while retaining the chairmanship of the Education Committee. This resignation and other circumstances made it impossible to launch *The Catholic Art Teacher* as planned this past spring.

The Convention and Workshop Committee decided on a theme and drew up the program for the 1959 National Convention, to be held at The College of St. Elizabeth, Convent Station, New Jersey.

Adding to the exhibitions and lec-

tures available to the membership and friends of the Association, the Exhibitions and Lectures Committee has prepared fifteen sets of slides from medieval manuscripts, with a descriptive booklet for each. These are the famous Jacob's Ladder filmstrips, which have been published by Mrs. Basil Gray, and can be procured from her at 47 Maze Hill, London S.E.10.

The Committee has also prepared slides of the drawings illustrating the parables, by the late Thomas Derrick, and secured other manuscript slides. Other sets of slides are in preparation. The older traveling exhibitions have been loaned nine times during the past year. The Committee is preparing the exhibition for the National Convention.

The Chairman of the Local and Diocesan Committee reports forty-six local units in various stages of formation.

The Organization Committee, considering the problems raised during the year by resignations and the limited resources of the Association, as well as the necessity for broadening our influence, has decided to recommend to the officers' meeting and general business meeting for discussion, and to the entire membership for ratification of constitutional changes where necessary, that:

1. the publication of *The Catholic Art Teacher* be set aside for the present but that the Education Committee be maintained to cooperate with the editor of the official organ of the Association on the publication of articles of special interest to teachers and to act as the official advisor to and voice of the Association on education matters, while being completely free to work on whatever projects seem advisable if personnel is available,
2. the Executive Directorship be united with the Presidency for the present,
3. the direction of the local units be given to the executive secretary,
4. the name of *The Catholic Art Quarterly* be changed to *Good Work* and a promotional campaign be undertaken.

I take this opportunity to thank our former Executive Director and Chairman of the Local and Diocesan Committee, Robert D. Feild, for his inspiration and efforts for the Association. We regret having to lose his official cooperation in our efforts and hope that he will continue his interest in and concern for the Asociation.

I also wish to thank Sister Marie Pierre, C.S.J., for several years the editor of the *Catholic Elementary Art Guide*, who has had to retire from all offices of the Association because of an illness. We assure Sister Marie Pierre of our good wishes and prayers as well as our thanks, and voice a hope for the continuation of her interest and cooperation in the work of the Association.

Finally, it is my privilege to announce to the membership that the Chairman of our Advisory Board, Graham Carey, has been awarded the medal "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice", by His Holiness, Pope John XXIII. I take this opportunity of congratulating Mr. Carey in the name of the Association which owes so much of its existence and vitality and orthodoxy to him.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Phelan

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Union City, N. J.

TO THE EDITOR:

In the Easter 1959 issue of *The Catholic Art Quarterly,* Father Durand writes, ". . . it is an unshakable principle of all art criticism that the image itself is the precious thing. A landscape by a true painter makes us wish that we could own his picture, not the meadow, woods or cattle which may have served as his model; and this is because the painter's only goal was the perfection of his picture." In a footnote you answered that such is not the theory held by the C.A.A. You wrote, "The argument in this paragraph is not altogether in line with the Principles of the Catholic Art Association's Constitution. If one cause is of greater importance than the other three it is surely not the formal cause but the final, sometimes called *causa causarum.*"

Do you not think that in this matter you made a slip? It seems to me that you have, and for this reason.

According to St. Thomas, the end of the virtue of art is the good of the work to be made (I.II Q.57. A,4.) ". . . some habits have the nature of virtue, through merely conferring aptness for good work: . . . But art confers the mere aptness for good work; since it does not regard the appetite.

"The reason for this difference is that art is the right reason about things to be made . . . Now *making* and *doing* differ, in that making is an action passing into outward matter, e.g., to build, to saw, and the like . . . On the other hand, the good (i.e., the end) of things made by art is not the good of man's appetite, *but the good of those things themselves.*"

Now in the ontological order the "end" of the work, insofar as it refers to something or some one else, is not the final cause but the *formal* cause of the work, the idea which gives it this particular form. The final cause is the work itself. For if the formal cause of the knife (thought of as an artifact solely) is not "to cut", then what is the formal cause? It must be something other than this idea "to cut", and then we have something other than a knife.

We are so psychologically constituted that to have any other motive than the good of the work, even if it be in the highest order, as a final object when working, is to produce a work that is less good and less suitable for its purpose. I think that this is what Father Durand is pointing out.

Sister Mary of the Compassion, O.P.

Dear Sister Mary:

The question at issue is the relative importance to artists of final and formal causes. May I answer your letter without reference to Thomistic texts, but with reference only to the realities themselves. I feel that St. Thomas, who called the appeal to authority "the weakest of all arguments", would wish us to discuss our problem in this way.

What are causes? What are formal and final causes? For the philosopher, a cause is "something that makes

something else to be." A formal cause is one which determines the caused thing's *nature,* the sort of thing that it is. A formal cause is a principle of specification. A final cause is one which determines the caused thing's relationships to other things, relationships of serving and being served.

Every conceivable thing is caused by formal and final principles. Each *is* something and each *does* something. Each has a nature to which it must be true, and an end for which it must be good. This is as true of artificial things as it is of the products of nature. The makers of artificial things cannot escape the laws of the universe.

Eric Gill gives somewhere the example of a railway journey from London to Liverpool. The journey may be valued because it achieves its primary purpose—to get travelers from one city to the other. But it may also be valued for itself, for the kind of thing that it is, which can be regarded either as an adventure or a nuisance. It can be valued for its final or for its formal cause, and preferably for both together.

We objected to Father Durand's paragraph chiefly because he stated that what is wrong with works of commercial art is that "they all have an ulterior purpose; they aim at something beyond themselves." On the contrary, we hold that what is bad about commercial work is commercialism, a form of secularism in which the profit motive, which should be secondary, is put in the place of the artistic motive (the good of the work) which should be primary. If an ulterior purpose disqualifies a work as one of art, then the *Divine Comedy* is disqualified, as Dante clearly states (Letter X, p.15) that his purpose in writing his poem is "to remove those living in this life from the state of misery, and lead them to the state of felicity." And what is true of Dante is true of almost every great artist until the Renaissance, and of many since.

We entirely agree with Father Durand that the artist's natural interest in his work is often almost entirely in its perfection, and that as a fallen being he tends to ignore final causes; but this tendency uncorrected causes aesthetic secularism, a perversion of normal art quite as horrid as that of the money-makers. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow, the artist to be normal must strive to keep *two* ends in view simultaneously: 1) the *finis operis,* the end for which that kind of thing is constructed as it is, and 2) the *finis operantis* which is his own private reason for engaging in his work. These must be identified. He must make the effort to will the good of the work above his own good. If he does not, his work is secular.

The necessity of the artist, if he is to achieve normality, is to combine his natural interest in the perfection of *what* he makes with a consideration of the thing's built-in *why.* This has been discussed at some length in *The Wheel of Artifice,* a publication of The Catholic Art Association.

Most of the errors of the secular art world are versions of the divorce of things which should be kept together. In more artistically normal times than ours, no one dreamed of divorcing the transcendentals (which of all beings cannot be divorced) or of producers and consumers regarding each other as enemies. Every one knew that making is a service, and that art is perfected making and therefore perfected service. It has been reserved for our times to see the clergy championing divorce.

The Editor.